



THE
PRINCETON
SEMINARY
BULLETIN

VOLUME XV, NUMBER 3 NEW SERIES 1994

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A Change of Editors

BY THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

Dr. Daniel L. Migliore, Arthur M. Adams Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, has decided to relinquish the editorship of *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* in order to devote his time more fully to teaching and research. We are all indebted to Dr. Migliore for the six years he has devoted to this labor of love in service to theology and church. Under his leadership, the *Bulletin* has achieved new heights as a sensitive and substantive theological journal, and we are delighted that he will continue his association with the *Bulletin* in his new capacity as Book Review Editor.

With this issue, Dr. James F. Kay, formerly Book Review Editor of the *Bulletin*, succeeds Dr. Migliore as Editor. Dr. Kay has recently been promoted by the Board of Trustees to Associate Professor of Homiletics and Liturgics. An ordained Presbyterian minister with pastoral experience, he received his doctoral training at Union Theological Seminary, New York, in systematic theology. Well regarded by students as a teacher, Dr. Kay is the author of *Christus Praesens: A Reconsideration of Rudolf Bultmann's Christology* (Eerdmans, 1994). A volume of his sermons has recently appeared under the title *Seasons of Grace: Reflections from the Christian Year* (Eerdmans, 1994).

The Princeton Seminary Bulletin remains in able editorial hands. Our gratitude to Dan Migliore for his significant contribution to the quality of a journal begun in 1907. Our best wishes to Jim Kay as he assumes his new editorial responsibilities.



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Challenge amid Change: The Call to Church Leadership

by JOYCE C. TUCKER

The speaker at the 1994 commencement exercises of Princeton Theological Seminary was Joyce C. Tucker, an ordained Presbyterian minister and the new Dean of Continuing Education at the Seminary.

Texts: Psalm 80

Romans 12

PRESIDENT GILLESPIE, trustees, members of the faculty and administration, family and friends of those graduating, and most especially, members of the Class of 1994: It is indeed a privilege to be with you on this important day and to share with you some “thoughts for the road.” Do know that I am aware of the consensus about these occasions: No one really wants to hear a commencement speaker—there just has to be one. I’ll try my best given that given. I shall address my remarks to those graduating and hope the rest of you will “listen in.”

Some of you receiving degrees here this morning probably think this event has been a long time coming. You are more than ready to move beyond this place! Others may have a few nostalgic thoughts and question whether you are ready to venture forth. But the time has indeed come! Many know where you are headed next; at least you know the place, even if you have little sense of what it will *really* be like. Others are still waiting for a call to be finalized. Some intend to continue in your same place of service, but with enhanced skills and understanding of the meaning of ministry. Others will go on to further study. For all, I hope it is an appropriate time to focus our attention upon the church and its leadership needs.

Mainline Protestant churches in the United States find themselves in a period of turbulent upheaval. Some parts of the church are affected far more than others by the forces of change. Many congregations do seem to be vibrant, healthy communities, but others are deeply troubled. Regional governing bodies find it rough going these days. Churches at denominational levels are experiencing painful transitions, downsizings, and restructurings—and that reality is true across many denominations.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), to which many of you belong and with which this seminary has been related since its founding, is one of the most troubled denominations at the present time. The current crisis was sparked by an ecumenical conference held last November and primarily attended by women. But the underlying problem is far older and much deeper. Presbyte-

rians today are a divided people. Let me share with you the words of James Andrews, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly, from an article published in the May 15th issue of a bulletin his office produces:

Presbyterians stand on the brink of serious damage to the very fabric of our part of the body of Christ. Formal division or schism does not seem likely, but the various regions of our church, and the governing bodies, may no longer work as closely together in carrying out mission, nor feel as great a sense of partnership. The Presbyterian Church would not be mutually interdependent, with each part fully representative of the whole. Our view of ecclesiology, our doctrine of the Church, would change. The impact of such a development would devastate both the integrity of our faith and the vitality of our mission.¹

From my experience over the last several months, I agree with Dr. Andrews. We Presbyterians are in a time of crisis of significant proportions. At its roots, it is a crisis of trust and of profound theological differences. Presbyterians must learn anew how to talk openly with one another about our faith. We must learn to discuss our differences, while acknowledging the Christian commitment of those whose views differ from our own. We have done too much shouting at each other about peripheral issues, while our anger and frustration have deepened.

It is not a quiet and peaceful church that you are going forth to serve, but one coping, anything but gracefully, with unsettling change. And it is a church in dire need of positive and committed leadership! It is upon the issue of leadership that I want to focus the most attention this morning.

But first a word about context. I am speaking from the context of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). That's what I know. That's where my identity is. That's what I have to offer. I'm keenly aware that many of you come from other contexts, and I celebrate that. I ask those of you who are members of other churches, and particularly those from other countries, to reflect upon whether what I say from the Presbyterian context in this country is also true for your church or to consider the ways in which your church is different from what I am describing.

I am convinced that a large portion of the mainline Protestant churches in the United States have, over the last thirty to thirty-five years, systematically de-emphasized the need for strong leadership. I know the Presbyterian Church

¹ James E. Andrews, "Unify," *OGA Info* 3 (May 15, 1994): 3.

did. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, we were rediscovering the importance of the ministry of all Christians. Too much emphasis had been placed on the ordained officers, particularly the pastor. What had been overlooked was the ministry of every church member and of the body of Christ as a whole. Ministry is not limited to the functions performed by those ordained to church office; it is the work of the entire people of God.

Clearly, the church was on the right track with this emphasis. And it was not a simple task to communicate it. Beginning in 1961 with a study book on *The Church and Its Changing Ministry*, and continuing with additional studies and church school curricula, Presbyterians communicated the message that all Christians are called to ministry. I believe that message has gotten through. I want to suggest that today's problem is a different one. In our time, we have focused so little attention on the need for leadership that those called to assume particular leadership tasks in the church sometimes fail to recognize that leadership is what is required.

An underlying assumption of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Order* is that persons ordained to any church office are ordained to a leadership responsibility. But one has to search hard to find any leadership language in the current *Book of Order*. I can find it in only a very few places. Leadership is underplayed, if mentioned at all.

We have to ask why. I believe it is because, in the years before the 1983 reunion within American Presbyterianism, the church had become frustrated with leaders who functioned in very authoritarian ways. The church, by and large, was not interested in following leaders who had to be "front and center" all the time. As the church moved away from the "lone-ranger" style of leader, it overcorrected to the point of minimizing the leadership task.

By 1992, there is a major change. The language of leadership permeates an entire General Assembly-approved report on the theology and practice of ordination. Also, an effort is made to describe in fresh ways the type of leadership that the church needs. It is a leadership that focuses upon the service of God following the model of Christ. There is an emphasis upon accountability—to God; to the church through its governing bodies; to colleagues in ministry; to the community of people whom one is called to serve. To quote this report:

One does not exercise leadership over and above the community, but at the behest of and on behalf of the people of God. . . . Leadership is not something that is imposed on a community, but something that involves a deep and abiding relationship within the community. Where the goal is

the upbuilding of a community of faith and the making of an effective witness to Jesus Christ, the issue of one's status and position becomes irrelevant.²

Several years ago a friend told me of being in a group of church members who were discussing a difficult subject. They turned to the pastor to request some input. The pastor responded: "Why are you asking me? I'm no different from any of the rest of you." That pastor may have been wise not to offer input too quickly. True, the pastor is no different in terms of status, is not of a "higher cut" or a little more holy than the others; the pastor is probably no smarter than others in the group. So what's the difference? Three or more years of theological education—that's one difference. And that should be of some value to the church! A pastor or other theologically educated church leader should be able to relate an understanding of how God works in the world to issues of current concern.

The church needs leaders who bring their theological knowledge to bear upon complex issues of our time and who share within the community of faith their struggling with these issues, even though they have found no adequate answers. Let me suggest some of the other leadership needs of today's church.

The church needs pastors who prepare sermons and plan worship services that enable congregations to hear the Word proclaimed, experience God's presence, and go forth into their weekly routines understanding themselves as God's people called to witness to Jesus Christ, to serve others, and to live in hope.

The church in these days needs leaders who help its members, many of whom have only minimal knowledge of the Bible and the Christian faith, grow in the life of faith and in the practice of spiritual disciplines.

The church needs leaders who establish educational programs for people of all ages, so that the faith of the parents can be more readily passed on to their children in our increasingly secular culture.

The church needs caring and compassionate leaders who are attuned to the needs and circumstances of the particular community, be that community a congregation, a governing body, a seminary, or another church institution.

The church needs leaders who involve its people in mission, enabling them to reach out to others, both in their own communities and across the hurting world.

² Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Minutes, 204th General Assembly, Part 1, Journal* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.], 1992), p. 1045.

The church needs leaders who hold together the calls to do evangelism and to do justice, not becoming so focused on one that they lose sight of the other.

The church needs leaders who welcome, respect, and learn from persons of other cultures and ethnicities, leaders who have a vision of the wholeness of the church and are committed to seeking its unity.

The church needs leaders whose moral authority is acknowledged by the community because the integrity of their living is consistent with the gospel they proclaim.

My list of the church's leadership needs is incomplete. I trust you can and will add to it—not just today but as you “live into” your particular leadership responsibility. I do believe that your theological education within this seminary has prepared you well for the work that lies ahead.

I encourage you to admit your mistakes—you'll make plenty! The church is very forgiving of pastors, educators, and other leaders who will say, “I really blew it this time!”

I also urge you to keep on learning. Most of you know that you are not sufficiently educated for a whole lifetime of ministry. You have achieved a long-term goal—one to be celebrated and enjoyed—but you can't rest long. You will have to find other ways to learn. Some may decide to pursue an even more advanced degree; others have run out of formal degrees to be attained. But for all, the requirements to struggle with new ideas and to develop new skills remain. Of course you already know that—but this is an appropriate occasion for saying it again, along with extending an invitation to consider Princeton's continuing education programs as you plan ways to keep current and to continue to grow.

Now, a few words to you as alumni and alumnae of Princeton Seminary: In our changing world, there are frequent calls for significant changes in theological education itself. You will not help this institution if you fall into a sentimental loyalty and pressure it to remain just as it was in the “good ol' days.” You would thereby be urging the Seminary to become second-rate as it moves into a new century.

I'm not sure how basic the changes in theological education will actually be. I do know there are serious calls for new ways to structure the M.Div. curriculum other than around the traditional four areas of Bible, church history, theology/ethics, and practical theology. Critics are urging more interdisciplinary teaching, more attention to the ways adults learn, and an organizational scheme that would truly bring unity and theological coher-

ence to first professional degree programs. Are the upcoming changes really going to get to the center, to the heart, of theological education or will they simply make slight variations on the outer edges?

The answer is not yet clear. But it is clear that Princeton is uniquely equipped to take a lead in shaping the theological education of the future. Some Princeton Seminary faculty are already involved in the discussions that are underway. Others should become so. Those willing to attempt meaningful change will be helped by former students who return from their varied experiences in the church, who participate in continuing education and other seminary events, and who engage faculty and administrators in serious conversation about ways to make seminary teaching and campus life ever more relevant to issues of ministry.

Finally, as you go forth from this seminary today to the service to which you have been called, I urge you to remember the words of our New Testament lesson. May they be regular reminders to you as you consider the way you should exercise your leadership responsibilities:

[Do not] think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but . . . think with sober judgment. . . . Love one another with mutual affection. . . . Serve the Lord. . . . Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. . . . Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. . . . If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you as you go forth to lead.

A Hermeneutics of Graduation

by THOMAS W. GILLESPIE

Farewell Remarks to the Class of 1994
by the President of the Seminary

THE THEME of this Farewell to the Class of 1994 is *hermeneutics*. Before developing it, let me explain to your families and friends here gathered what in the world I will be talking about. Hermeneutics is the term we use in seminary to designate the theory and the practice of *interpretation*. It is an important topic because seminarians must learn how to interpret the Bible—and the world in which we live. Karl Barth insisted that we should read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other—the message of the scriptures interpreting current events and the newspaper reports illuminating the message of the Bible. *Doing* that is an art that can be learned. Learning *why* and *how* to do it entails a theory about what is going on when anyone engages in the task of interpretation.

Just how complicated the theoretical aspect has become is attested in Anthony Thiselton's latest volume, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*.¹ Surveying the current state of the discussion in his introduction, Thiselton identifies over a dozen different hermeneutical theories. Among these are the *hermeneutics of understanding* associated with Schleiermacher, who argued that we can grasp the meaning of written materials by identifying with the author in such a way that we relive the experience out of which the author writes. *Existential interpretation*, associated with Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Heidegger, is discussed with respect to the claim that a text reveals its author's self-understanding or understanding of existence. The theory of E. D. Hirsch, Jr., that the aim of interpretation is to comprehend the meaning intended by an author, is mentioned and dismissed as the *hermeneutics of innocence*. Hirsch is considered naive because we now live this side of Paul Ricoeur's *hermeneutics of suspicion* which requires us to ask about the hidden agenda that allegedly informs every text. This theory informs the *hermeneutics of liberation* in which only those texts that offer deliverance from social and political oppression are privileged. Then there is the *hermeneutics of tradition* associated with the German

¹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992).

philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, who contends that every interpretation represents a "fusion" between the horizon of the author and the horizon of the reader. More recent are the *contextual-relative socio-pragmatic hermeneutics* of Richard Rorty and the *socio-metacritical hermeneutics* of Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel.

As if this abbreviated list were not sufficiently confusing, I wish to add yet another hermeneutical theory to it as my parting gift to you. I call it *the hermeneutics of graduation*. Much is made of the gender, the race, the ethnic identity, and the social location of both authors and their readers in current interpretation theory. Your graduation from theological seminary will not change your gender or race or ethnic identity. But for most of you it will alter your *social location*. Those going on to further study are only postponing the inevitable. With graduation you exchange this place of academic study for a place of intelligent ministry. With graduation your status as a student of theology is converted to the status of a servant of the Word of God. What this entails hermeneutically is remarkable. From now on you will be not only the one who does the reading but also the one who is read. Once you assume ecclesial leadership you will be not only the one who interprets but also the one who is interpreted. For in ministry the minister becomes *a primary text* that is read regularly by the people of God. The same is true *mutatis mutandis* of those who teach. In fact, this is for both ministers and teachers only an intensified characteristic of the Christian life.

The apostle Paul attests to this when he asks the church in Corinth, "Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we?" (2 Cor. 3:1a). Now we all know about letters of recommendation. We included them in our application for admission to Princeton Seminary. Those who are going on for further studies submitted letters of recommendation with their applications for doctoral programs. Ph.D. graduates today have such letters on file with their individual curriculum vitae. Those seeking a call to ministry have listed references who, when asked, will write letters of recommendation for them. The point is that a letter of recommendation represents a hermeneutical act. People who know us use this medium to *interpret* us to those who do not yet know us. At best a strong letter of recommendation can get you an interview. When that happens, you must interpret yourself as well as be interpreted. Thus the apostle continues, "You yourselves are our letter, written on your hearts, to be known and read by all; and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor. 3:1b-3). Analogously, you graduates are

our letters of recommendation. Who you now are, what you now know and believe, what you have become over the years of your studies here attests publicly to the quality of our faculty and curriculum. People will now read Princeton Seminary in your life and work.

More importantly, however, they will read you. And they will do so in the hope of discerning “a letter of Christ” in you, a letter “prepared” by all who have influenced you in the way of Christ, but a letter ultimately written on your hearts by “the Spirit of the living God.” If your future experience of being interpreted is anything like mine has been, you will be hoping that people will exercise a hermeneutics of understanding—that they will be empathetic to who you are and open to what you have to say. You may even pray for a hermeneutics of innocence—that people will allow you to speak your mind and heart, and take your words and deeds as you intend them. But whether or not they know the hermeneutical lingo, people in today’s world will no doubt exercise toward you a hermeneutics of suspicion. They may suspect your motivation for being in ministry. They will wonder what the real agenda is behind your preaching and teaching. They may read your friendship as a way of manipulating them to give more of their time and money to the church or to enlist in your social causes or to vote your political convictions. They will sit back in the pews and wait to see whether your love is genuine and for them. A hermeneutics of suspicion can be overcome, but it takes a major effort on your part. It takes trust, building over time, between ministers and their people, between educators and their students. Such trust is not established instantly or by virtue of your office. You win the right to be trusted by who you are and what you do and say.

So now you have graduated from theological seminary. Go forth now to interpret Christ by the letter you are and to be interpreted by those for whom your letter is intended.

Earthquakes, Fault Lines, and Foundations: Reflections on Ministry

by DENNIS T. OLSON

Dennis T. Olson, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, was this year's baccalaureate preacher. His most recent book is Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading.

Texts: 1 Kings 19:9b-18
1 Corinthians 3:5-11
Matthew 27:45-56

WHAT'S IT like to be in the midst of an earthquake? I asked that question of my sister-in-law and her husband who live north of Los Angeles and who experienced the bone-rattling earthquake of January 17, 1994. "What was it like?" I asked on the phone. The reply:

It was a multisensory experience that lasted only forty seconds but seemed endless. Through our windows, we saw swaying power lines and electrical sparks light up the dark night like fireworks on the Fourth of July. Pictures rattled on walls; dishes clanged in cupboards; furniture shifted and tipped; foundations and frames creaked eerily. Your whole body shook. When we tried to talk, we babbled as if someone were pummeling our chest with staccato fists. Sight, sound, and touch all told us the end might be near. Chaos ruled. And then silence, total silence. More than anything, the earthquake shook you to the core of your security. We felt vulnerable to forces over which we had no control. When we feel one of the countless aftershocks that have followed the original earthquake, we still cringe. We wonder if this may be another big one.

Why talk about earthquakes on such a joyous, peaceful spring day in Princeton, New Jersey? Why speak of earthquakes as we celebrate with joy your graduation and the end of a long educational road at Princeton Theological Seminary? I want to speak to you of earthquakes because as you leave this place, you are entering an earthquake zone called ministry.

Whether as preachers or teachers or counselors or professors or chaplains, you are crossing over into a field of earthquakes where the fault lines are real but often buried just beneath the surface. I was teaching with a group of pastors this past week who each have twenty to thirty years of ministry experience behind them. I asked them what words of wisdom they might have for a class of seminary graduates. One pastor said, "It's hopeless. Those graduates won't hear a word you're saying. Graduation time is like premarital

counseling for newlyweds. You try to bring some reality into their heads while they're off in their own romantic dream world on cloud nine." One less cynical pastor offered something more positive: "Tell them this. Ministry will challenge you and test you until you find your deepest foundation. It will knock down all your false securities until you come to the only true foundation, the grace of God and the power of the gospel."

Ministry has something to do with earthquakes, fault lines, and foundations. Our scripture texts testify to that. The Old Testament prophet Elijah won a dramatic victory against the prophets of the Canaanite god Baal. On top of Mount Carmel in a public display for all Israel to see, Elijah demonstrated the power of the one true God of Israel and humiliated the Baal prophets. But King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were not pleased because the prophets of Baal were their favored prophets. In anger, the king and queen vowed to kill Elijah. Rather than stand confident in God's power which had just been so clearly displayed on Mount Carmel, Elijah ran away in fear for his own life.

Elijah runs into a cave at Mount Horeb, otherwise known as Mount Sinai, the mountain where God first made the covenant with Moses and Israel after the exodus out of Egypt. There at this place of strong memory of God's defeat of Pharaoh and the forces of slavery and oppression, God comes to Elijah. As the prophet cowers in fear in the womblike security of a cave, God asks, "What in the world are you doing here, Elijah?" Elijah whimpers in response from within the cave, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. . . . I alone am left, and they are seeking my life to take it away." Elijah hopelessly wrings his hands over how his Yahweh-Alone Denomination, once a mainline denomination in northern Israel, has rapidly diminished in numbers. Elijah thinks he alone remains faithful and true. Elijah is a case of ministerial burnout and despair.

Then God causes to pass by a great wind which splits huge boulders with its force. Next a powerful earthquake shakes the ground and cave in which Elijah is hiding. Then a burning-hot fire passes by. But God is not in any of those visible signs of power. Finally, there passes by Elijah in his cave a sound of sheer silence. Sheer silence. We are not sure whether God is in the silence or not. The text does not say. What the text does say is that Elijah finally emerged out of his womblike cave. Hopeful that Elijah has had a born-again experience, God asks, "Now what are you doing here, Elijah?"

Unfortunately, Elijah has not demonstrably changed. He simply repeats his complaint again: "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of

hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant. . . . I alone am left, and they are seeking my life to take it away." God responds by telling Elijah to get back to work and to realize that he doesn't know half of what God is doing in the world. The LORD says, "I will leave seven thousand people in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal." Elijah is not alone. God has been working in hidden, silent ways among God's people. Elijah's mission is simply this: Be faithful to the tasks God has given you and trust that God will use your work in ways of which you may never be aware. The earthquake-like power of God to rock the world is sometimes in sheer silence. Our task is simply to be faithful in proclaiming God's Word and doing justice. Trust God to do the rest. Friends, resist despair and remain faithful in your calling.

In Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, the apostle is wrestling with a people splintered by all kinds of fault lines that have divided this community of faith: super "spiritual" Christians vs. the rest of the community, Jew vs. Greek, men vs. women, weak vs. strong, moral vs. immoral. These controversies rocked this community like a series of earthquakes, breaking it into pieces. In a familiar scenario, the people aligned themselves against each other according to certain personalities of preachers. Paul asks,

For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe. . . . I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. We are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building. . . . No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

That foundation was laid at the cross. It is at the cross, the death of Jesus for you, where all the other fault lines and earthquakes and divisions of the world are rendered ultimately meaningless. For when we stand before the cross, we all stand on level ground, a ground that shakes with the power of God's amazing grace, a grace that levels all our false securities. We all stand on level ground for the cross promises that the humanly constructed barriers of hatred and injustice, of pride and arrogance, of greed and jealousy will all come down in God's future and final triumph.

We stand before the cross of Christ where the earth quakes with the cry of Jesus, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" We stand before the cross of Christ where the temple curtain is torn in two, rocks are split, tombs are opened, the dead are raised up to life, and a Roman centurion confesses, "Truly this crucified one is the son of God." We stand before the quaking cross where the powerful are brought down from their thrones and the lowly

are lifted up. We stand before the cross where the disciples have all run away scared like *Elijah* but where the women who had followed Jesus and provided for him remain in faithful vigil.

The quaking word of the cross, the power of the gospel, the justification of the ungodly, good news for the poor, justice for the oppressed—this is the foundation of your calling as ministers of the gospel in Jesus Christ. You are called today to go out to plant, to water, and to trust God to give the growth. You are called today to be faithful ministers of the Word of God, confident that God is working in your community and your world in thousands of hidden ways. You are called today to witness to the work of God in Jesus Christ, which now is hidden but will be fully revealed at the last day.

But dearly beloved, if you have the eyes of faith to see, God will give you from time to time glimpses of that quaking power of God working in the lives of people, communities, and nations. You will see glimpses

—in the face of little babies as you pour the water and word of promise upon them in baptism and usher another soul into the family of God,
—as you offer the gifts of God's love in bread, wine, and words of forgiveness given for you,

—as you proclaim the Word of God to a people who amazingly come back Sunday after Sunday to hear it,

—as you teach and lead a community to deeper faith and obedience to love God and love neighbor,

—as you counsel the brokenhearted and see the beginnings of transformation,

—as you teach a class of students about the Bible, church history, theology, or practical theology, and they say "ah-hah!"

—as you witness in world events the birth pangs of God-given freedom and dignity in South Africa and the Middle East, even amid ongoing tragedy and conflict in places like Bosnia and Rwanda,

—as you yourself labor prophetically for justice and reconciliation,

—as you sing the praises of God over the casket of a loved one, as I did recently at the death of my father.

In these and other times, you will see glimpses of God's power, a power that raises life out of death, hope out of despair, justice out of oppression, meaning out of chaos, faith out of fear.

Go, plant, water, and trust God to give the growth.

Telling the Truth¹

by PAUL L. LEHMANN

*Paul L. Lehmann, formerly the Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, was the Charles A. Briggs Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary at the time of his death on February 27, 1994. This essay is adapted from his book, *The Decalogue and a Human Future*, appearing this month from Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. The following excerpt is used here with permission of the publisher.*

ACCORDING TO Luther there is one more indispensable treasure beyond our body, wife or husband, and property, and that is our honor. "It is," Luther declares, "intolerable to live among men in public disgrace and contempt. Therefore God will not have our neighbor deprived of his reputation, honor, and character any more than of his money and possessions."² Hence, we arrive at the eighth commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."³

Luther describes three ways in which this commandment applies to the Christian life. First, he says, the commandment condemns the courts of justice, which, rather than defending the poor, falsely accuse and punish them. Believing that it is "the universal misfortune of the world that men of integrity seldom preside in courts of justice," Luther points out that it is the poor and powerless who inevitably suffer from false charges. From this situation Luther claims that "the first application of this commandment, then, is that everyone should help his neighbor maintain his rights. He must not allow these rights to be thwarted or distorted but should promote and resolutely guard them, whether he be judge or witness, let the consequences be what they may."⁴ Hence, according to Luther, the commandment points intimately to the public responsibility for justice.

Second, Luther claims that the commandment applies to "spiritual juris-

¹ This essay is edited from Paul L. Lehmann's book *The Decalogue and a Human Future: The Meaning of the Commandments for Making and Keeping Human Life Human* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994). Lehmann began work on this book when he delivered the Annie Kinkaid Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in March 1979. The title of the project then was, "The Commandments and the Common Life."

² Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 399, pars. 255-56.

³ Editor's note: Lehmann follows Luther's numbering of the Commandments.

⁴ Luther, "Large Catechism," p. 400, pars. 258, 260.

diction or administration." Here Luther points to the false witness that is often borne against "godly preachers and Christians," who are frequently accused of heresy and apostasy. According to Luther, "the Word of God must undergo the most shameful and spiteful persecution and blasphemy; it is contradicted, perverted, misused, and misinterpreted."⁵ Nevertheless, he counsels Christians to "let this pass," knowing that such condemnation of God's truth and God's people is inevitable in this sinful world.

The third way in which the commandment against bearing false witness against the neighbor applies to us, according to Luther, is that it "forbids all sins of the tongue by which we may injure or offend our neighbor." In other words, Luther condemns the vice of gossip, noting "the common vice of human nature that everyone would rather hear evil than good about his neighbor."⁶ Even though the content of a particular piece of gossip may in itself be true, Luther's understanding of truth, much like that of Bonhoeffer after him, encompasses more than the mere equivalence of words with facts. Where and when and how one speaks what one knows is also part and parcel of how we define the truth.⁷

Whereas all three of these applications of the eighth commandment hold importance for us today, our attention here will focus on Luther's first application of this commandment, that is, the fact that courts of justice often falsely accuse and punish the poor. In this regard the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg forty years ago as well as the ongoing ill-treatment of the Haitians in the United States today provide powerful cases in point. Here the innocent have indeed been oppressed at the hands of the courts, their cases have been lost, and their punishment has been severe and sometimes irreversible. Here indeed we see further evidence of the need for us to take responsibility for our neighbors in part by seeking to uphold their civil rights.

THE ROSENBERGS⁸

The year was 1953. The day was Friday, the 19th of June. The time was between 8:04 and 8:16 p.m. The hour had been advanced from the custom-

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 400, par. 262.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 400, pars. 263-64.

⁷ See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "What Is Meant by 'Telling the Truth?'" in *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 363-72.

⁸ These reflections were first published under the title "History's New Light: The Rosenbergs, Then and Now," *Christianity and Crisis* 38 (July 17, 1978): 185-87. They were also part of a speech made at an ecumenical memorial service for the Rosenbergs held at Union Square in Manhattan on June 19, 1978.

ary final hour of the day, set—tauntingly, and even blasphemously, as it seemed then (ironically, and even cynically, as it seems in retrospect)—to take account of the start of the Jewish Shabbat at sundown. Julius went first to his death in the electric chair in Sing Sing Prison at Ossining, New York. Ethel followed her husband in the same manner. Both were steadfast in their unwavering insistence that they were innocent of the crime of espionage with which they had been charged and dubiously tried and sentenced to death. This claim of innocence is yet to be convincingly disproved in conscience and in law.

There was at the time a gathering outcry both of conscience and of law, a stirring among the people, both across this land and around the world, because a denial of right and justice had occurred that—in its very haste to deny itself and claim the name both of right and of justice—had the more ineradicably acquired the guise and the guilt of the oppression of the poor. For the poor, in our society just as in Luther's, are those who are either defenseless or whose defense has been trampled by the callous intrigue of privilege and power; who have no sustaining place or protection or opportunity or guardianship in the land; who are, in the most dehumanizing sense of the phrase, "strangers within the gate."

On Wednesday, June 17, 1953, Justice William O. Douglas granted a stay of execution. However, as some knew but most did not, an arrangement had already been agreed upon between Chief Justice Fred Vinson and Herbert Brownell, the Attorney General of the United States, according to which the Chief Justice would take the unprecedented step of summoning the full membership of the Court into special session for the purpose of vacating the stay that Justice Douglas was expected to grant. On Thursday, June 18, 1953, the full Court convened, and on Friday, the 19th, the Court vacated the stay, and thus deprived Ethel and Julius Rosenberg of the remaining legal preemption of the awesome sentence condemning them to death.

Appeals for commutation of the sentence by President Eisenhower included an appeal by His Holiness, Pius XII, attesting the intense concern around the world with the Rosenberg trial and its grim conclusion. In spite of all their efforts, the people who in 1953 gave first priority in conscience and law to right and justice, to humane apperception and compassion—in public as in private affairs—experienced defeat at the hands of the Court.

Consistent with Luther's claim that the courts overlook the rights of the poor and innocent, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were victims of injustice played out in the courts of justice. They were the victims of a proceeding in the judicial court of Manhattan, presided over by Judge Irving R. Kaufman.

To many people it was evident then—as has become increasingly evident since—that Judge Kaufman's mind was made up even before the trial began on the question of the sentence he would impose. The shocking series of *ex parte* judicial actions seemed already then to be in tandem with the career ambitions of the prosecutorial staff and, indeed, of the judge himself. These actions ill concealed the lurking kangaroo character of the court in which the Rosenbergs were tried and convicted. "Justice," as the prophet Habakkuk once put it, was coming "out perverted" (Hab. 1:4, NEB) because the law was being used to victimize those who had been brought before the bar of judgment, not to adjudicate the cause that had so bitterly set enmity between the accusers and the accused.

It was, indeed, "a dread and awful time." The frenzy with which those in high places, at a mounting tempo approaching hysteria, sought to ensnare those in low places in a conspiracy of fear and suspicion and mistrust, so that everyone should be set against his or her neighbor, concealed more than the self-justifying ambitions of the powerful and the privileged in this land. It concealed a fundamental loss of confidence in the vision, the hopes, and the principles that informed and shaped the founding of our country, and that, in the course of human events, had made the United States of America a harbinger of human freedom and opportunity, possibility and fulfillment, for all the peoples and nations of the earth.

In retrospect, the wonder is not at the fact that the love of so many for freedom and justice and "a civil body politick" (in Jefferson's phrase) grew cold. The wonder is rather at the more than considerable number of people in our country and around the world who did not bow the knee before self-justifying power; who were not driven into silence by the institutionalized suppression of dissent; who held firmly to the conviction that the integrity of innocence, until guilt be proven beyond reasonable doubt, is the sign that justice is the criterion and purpose of law, not law the criterion and purpose of justice.

For these people, a humane apperception nurtured the discernment that, beyond and over and above the question of the guilt or innocence of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, there was the question of whether the state is the master or the servant of the people. At stake is the fateful difference between a state in which the power of the law has been surrendered to the law of power and a state in which freedom is the indispensable condition of order and justice is the criterion of law. For any state in which the power of the law has been surrendered to the law of power has abandoned the way of freedom, justice, and right and has embraced the course of tyranny. So Ethel and Julius

Rosenberg were the victims of a court, of a state, and of a society whose confidence in freedom, justice, and right was in disarray. The same, as we will now see, can be said of refugees fleeing the injustice of Haiti and seeking asylum in the United States, but not always finding a nation as committed to truth and justice as they expected.

THE HAITIANS⁹

On August 19, 1979, *The New York Times* carried a special dispatch from reporter Wayne King in Miami. It read in part:

A woman and five small children drowned, allegedly forced overboard into 20 feet of dark water by two men smuggling them and others into the country, part of a stream of Haitians fleeing their homeland.

Nine made it to the shore alive. One is missing. The body of 31-year-old Elaine Lorfilis washed onto the beach. The bodies of the five children, 4-11 years old, were found bobbing in the sea.

On July 2, 1980, in a class-action suit in Miami Federal District Court, Judge James Lawrence King (no relation to reporter King) ruled that more than 4,000 Haitians seeking asylum in the U.S. had been denied due process of law and equal protection of the laws, and had been victims of "systematic and pervasive" discrimination by immigration authorities who had "pre-judged Haitian asylum cases as lacking any merit." Judge King found that the manner in which the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had treated these Haitians "violated the Constitution, the immigration statutes, international agreements, INS regulations and INS operating procedures." And he declared, "It must stop!" More than fourteen years later, however, it has not stopped, and until it does, Dieumerici Lorfilis—husband of Elaine and father of the five drowned children—is, along with countless others, the silent witness to the almost genocidal inhumanity that characterizes the treatment of the Haitian refugees by past and now present government officials of the U.S. through its Departments of Justice and State.

The present plight of the Haitians began in 1957, when François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier assumed power in Haiti. From then until his death in 1971, he ruled this small Caribbean country with a cruel dictatorial power, torturing political opponents and arbitrarily placing citizens in prison without trial

⁹ Portions of this section were first published in "The Haitian Struggle for Human Rights," *The Christian Century* 97 (October 8, 1980): 941-43, and in "The Stranger within the Gate: Two Stories for the American Conscience," by Paul Lehmann and Ira Gollobin, *The Christian Century* 89 (November 15, 1972): 1149-52.

or hearing. As he lay dying in 1971, "Papa Doc" Duvalier, as "President for Life," proclaimed his son, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc"), his successor with the same title. The principal instruments of presidential repression and suppression of human rights in Haiti remained the *Tontons Macoutes*, the dreaded secret police force of the Duvaliers—30,000 strong. Even now, though Jean Claude Duvalier is gone and a duly elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, shows hope for political reform, the country continues to be in political disarray as Aristide is prevented from exercising his office.

Haiti is as miserable economically as it is politically. Long before the present situation erupted, poverty was notorious. The population is largely peasant, subject to the vagaries of precarious small-farm and village existence. Economic deprivation has contributed to a population mobility that has made the Haitian people the wanderers of the Caribbean. They have provided cheap labor, chiefly for the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas—and on this account they have endured the humiliating discovery that the attempt to break free of a subsistence level of existence at home serves but to make them victims of exploitation abroad. On the other hand, this same search for a viable economic level of existence has made them victims of the judgment, by their own government as well as by foreign ones, that they are economic migrants and in no sense political refugees. Since December 12, 1972, when the first boatload of Haitians arrived in Florida after an eight-hundred-mile journey of indescribable torment and danger, this fiction has functioned as the cornerstone of U.S. policy toward the Haitians.

From the first, the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations treated the Haitians with hostility instead of hospitality. Prejudged to be economic and not political refugees, they were given cursory "interviews" upon their arrival, with no attorney permitted. They were imprisoned, often on a \$1,000 bond, and those released were denied work authorization. They have fared no better under the Reagan, Bush, and now Clinton administrations, campaign promises to the contrary.

After welcoming Cubans for twenty years, Washington is hard pressed to justify its ill-treatment of the Haitian refugees without being accused of racial bias, since the Haitians, unlike most Cubans, are black. As far back as February 1974, a resolution of the Governing Board of the National Council of Churches noted this racial aspect and called attention to its "divisive" potential. From the beginning of the controversy the congressional Black Caucus, the National Urban League, and, above all, Haitian communities and the black community in Florida have been in the forefront of the struggle to win political asylum for the Haitians, as a minimal and just recognition of their

human rights. Innumerable religious groups (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish), many labor organizations, and government officials have at various times joined in supporting asylum. This escalating pressure, along with favorable television coverage and major newspaper editorials favoring asylum, has to some extent eroded Washington's opposition to the recognition of Haitians' human rights, but the abusive treatment continues.

The Haitians' struggle calls into question the commitment of the U.S. government to the achievement of human rights in this land and in every land. It exposes the need for a foreign policy in and through which justice is discerned and practiced as the surest safeguard of security, peace, and freedom in the Caribbean and anywhere else in the world. The struggle unmasks the specter of racial discrimination that haunts the refusal to treat the Haitians in the same way as Cubans, Vietnamese, and others in flight from political repression and economic despair.

Luther's insistence that the eighth commandment condemns the courts of justice for falsely accusing and punishing the poor prods us to remember that deeply rooted in the Hebrew-Christian faith is concern for the "stranger within the gate." Under the covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel, care of the poor, the widows, and the aliens is a fundamental way of signaling recognition of Yahweh as sole and righteous God whose continuing presence in the midst of his people liberates them. Thus the strongly mandatory Book of Deuteronomy specifies that "cursed be anyone who deprives the alien, the orphan, and the widow of justice" (27:19). Concern for the stranger witnesses to the justice intrinsic to God's nature and will and to the integrity of the people's faith.

Jesus of Nazareth was brought up in the piety of the covenant of God with humanity and of human beings with one another. What Abraham had launched and Moses had given political form in the historical consciousness of the Hebrew people, Jesus affirmed as the secret of human community and fulfillment—a community long awaited and worked for, and suddenly, with his life and teaching, giving present reality to the shape of the future. "The kingdom of God," Jesus called it; and in the powerful parable summarizing what the kingdom of God was all about, he made it plain that the future belongs to those who welcome the stranger. "I was a stranger," he said, "and you welcomed me" (Mt. 25:35). With Jesus, an ancient responsibility was brought under the liberating impulse of a community of discipleship. This community was born in the transformation of the babel of languages, which turn strangers into enemies, by a Pentecostal gift through which each understands every other. The people were "amazed and astonished, [and] they asked,

'... how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?' " (Acts 2:7-8).

If "fantastic" designates a basic and humanizing connection between fantasy and experience, it is fantastic to suggest that the story of civilization is the story of the stranger made to feel at home. Yet it can be said that, from Abraham and Moses to Jesus and the community of his presence and spirit, the good news is that the freedom to be and to stay human in the world is expressed and nurtured by the gift of hospitality to the stranger and that societies gain or lose sense and stability according to how they make room for the stranger within their gate. By the same token, the bad news is that persons and societies who turn out the stranger turn in upon themselves and sooner or later wither and die.

In the United States of America today, however, this saving story and the saving reality it points to are in high disregard, signaled by the mounting temptation to convert the stranger among us from a neighbor into a scapegoat. The many urgent and complex problems that beset the nation—poverty, population explosion, environmental pollution, and the liberation of oppressed groups—are almost all-absorbing, and amid the furious clamor and confusion of attempts to set them right the voice of the strangers within our gates goes unheard, their plight unnoticed. This disregard of the eighth commandment allows the principalities and powers that shape our nation's policies to pursue their subtle violation of the conscience of a people rooted in and nurtured by the saving story.

There was a time when immigrants to this country were welcomed. But today many of our government officials and much of our press call them "aliens"—a word implying not only that they are noncitizens but that their way of life is inferior and even hostile to ours.

The Bill of Rights makes no distinction between "persons" and "citizens." It guarantees to all "persons" certain rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly, due process of law, and equal protection under the laws. Invasion of the constitutional rights of noncitizens endangers the constitutional rights of citizens; for as "persons," neither of these has greater stature than the other. There is no way to breach the constitutional wall protecting noncitizens without simultaneously opening the floodgates to erosion of the rights of citizens. The choice before us as a people lies between the politics of death and a politics of humanity. In America today, the story of the stranger is one concrete point of entry into the saving story, and conversely, the saving story is the point of entry into the experience and the power that bring memories and hopes together in the liberation of the present. Together, the two stories

are a tale of hope for a politics of humanity, which those who practice the politics of death among us can neither match nor prevent. Here is a legacy for an America that has neither the need nor the desire to be supreme in the earth, but an America that is in truth a land of promise. Those of us whose apperception is nurtured at the intersection of these two stories do well to remember Luther's claim that the first application of the eighth commandment regarding the prohibition against bearing false witness against the neighbor lies in positive instruction to help our neighbors maintain their rights.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theological Ethic¹

by NANCY J. DUFF

Nancy J. Duff is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of Humanization and the Politics of God: The Koinonia Ethics of Paul Lehmann. She gave this lecture on March 5, 1994 at a conference on Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

SEVERAL MONTHS before his retirement as the Stephen Colwell Professor of Christian Ethics at Princeton Seminary, Charles West and his wife Ruth invited my husband and me to dinner. After dinner Charles took us into his impressive library in their old, beautifully renovated farm house. As we looked around the library Charles picked up a nice-looking, hard-bound book and handed it to me, saying that a publisher had sent it to him to review. The title of the book was *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*.² Charles had taught a course on Bonhoeffer's theology and ethics for many years at the Seminary. "I want you to have this book," he said, "as a way to encourage you to teach the Bonhoeffer course, because if you don't teach it, no one will."

I was first introduced to Bonhoeffer's theology by Dan West who led me in a directed study of Bonhoeffer's work one summer, when I was a student at Austin College. My interest in Bonhoeffer's thought was sparked further when I met Paul Lehmann, who was a visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, when I was a first-year seminarian. Paul had been one of Bonhoeffer's closest American friends when Bonhoeffer studied at Union Seminary in New York, and before Paul died this past February, he continued to be my teacher and mentor and friend.³ Along with many other students and friends of Paul, I had the privilege of hearing stories about Bonhoeffer that Paul loved to tell.

It did not, therefore, take long for Charles West to persuade me to teach the course on Bonhoeffer's theology and ethics. Nevertheless, it was a daunting task to put the course together, since I had not read much of Bonhoeffer's work and none of the secondary literature for a number of years. I imagined

¹ This essay is an edited version of a presentation given at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton. I am especially grateful to Wallace Alston for his invitation to speak.

² Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, eds., *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990).

³ I eventually wrote my dissertation on Paul Lehmann's work, which was subsequently published as *Humanization and the Politics of God: The Koinonia Ethics of Paul Lehmann* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992). For the memorial sermon preached at Lehmann's funeral at Nassau Presbyterian Church on March 2, 1994, see Fleming Rutledge, "A Tribute to Paul Louis Lehmann," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15 (July 1994): 165-69.

the course as a small seminar where I would read Bonhoeffer's books along with a dozen or so students. Much to my surprise almost sixty students signed up for the course. When I mentioned my surprise to Charles West, he simply replied, "Oh, yes, when I taught the course we would often have as many as ninety."

The number of students who take the Bonhoeffer course coupled with the large group of people gathered here at Nassau Presbyterian Church to talk about Bonhoeffer's life and work raises the question of why there is such a strong interest in studying the life and thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Charles West suggests that many seniors take the course on Bonhoeffer as a way to assess where they've come theologically in their three years in seminary, and to look at their theology again in light of Bonhoeffer's work. Last winter I participated in an event similar to this one at the First Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey, with Joe Robinson and Don Shriver. Even though we were competing with Sunday afternoon football and bad weather, we had a large turnout. There is obviously an enormous amount of interest in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thought. Perhaps you, who have gathered here, could help us understand why there is such interest in Bonhoeffer.

THE LEGACY OF BONHOEFFER

One of the fascinating features of Bonhoeffer's thought that I have noticed when teaching the course at the Seminary is that both conservative and liberal students are equally attracted to studying Bonhoeffer's work. It is equally interesting to note each group's surprise at what they find. On the one hand, when we read *Christ the Center*, *Creation and Fall*, and portions of his more meditative pieces, *Life Together* and *The Cost of Discipleship*, the liberal students are taken aback by the very traditional theological language of these books.⁴ This is not what they expected when they came to study the theologian who spoke of "religionless Christianity" in a "world come of age."⁵ On the other hand, when we read *Ethics*, conservative students are startled when they find that Bonhoeffer rejects the value of absolute law. This is not what they expected when they came to study the theologian whose commitment to the gospel was so great that he risked—and lost—his life for what he believed.

Bonhoeffer's theology calls into question the rift that divides theological

⁴ *Christ the Center* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978); *The Cost of Discipleship*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1959); *Creation and Temptation* (London: SCM Press, 1966); *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1954).

⁵ Both phrases are found in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

conservatism and liberalism, and challenges us to unite what we tend to separate. While liberal and conservative Christians alike are interested in both our relationship to God and our relationship to the neighbor, each *tends* to emphasize one over the other. Speaking in the most sweeping ways (but without meaning to caricature), one can say that conservative Christians tend to stress our relationship with God and whether or not our souls are saved, that is, whether we are prepared for life in the next world. Liberals, on the other hand, tend to emphasize our relationship with one another and whether or not people are saved from hunger and poverty and other forms of human oppression, that is, whether we are prepared for life in this world. According to Bonhoeffer's understanding of the Christian faith, it is impossible to separate these concerns. You cannot have true faith in God apart from being in relationship with human beings, and you cannot be in responsible relationship with human beings apart from true faith in God. Bonhoeffer's theology will not tolerate what he believed to be a false choice in defining the church's mission: "Should the church serve people's spiritual needs or their physical needs?" In Bonhoeffer's understanding, the gospel *always* unites these two concerns. Readers of his theology who stand firmly on one or the other side of this debate will not find their emphasis affirmed but stretched to include the other side of the argument with equal zeal.

This union of the spiritual and physical responsibility of the church is based on the doctrine of Christ, which provides the foundation for Bonhoeffer's ethic. According to Bonhoeffer, at the heart of the Christian ethic stands the call to be conformed to the image of Christ. His ethic, therefore, is built in large part upon the doctrine of the incarnation. Proper interpretation of the incarnation demands that Christians recognize that they are called to live in this world, not to reject the world of "time and space and things," as Paul Lehmann used to say. According to Bonhoeffer the church does not stand on the borders of the village; the church does not exist at the periphery of life; the church stands at the very center of human existence. Dwelling as it does at the center of the village, the church can neither conform to the world (i.e., accept the world the way it is and abide by the general mores of any society) nor completely rebel against the world. We are called to live in the world as Christians conformed to the image of Christ who was incarnate in this world. As Christians who are formed in the image of Christ we are to act as people who live for others, just as Christ was—as one of Bonhoeffer's most well-known phrases describes—"the man who lived for others."⁶

⁶ Ibid., p. 382.

One can better understand this tension of living in the world but always as one conformed to the image of Christ by remembering that for Bonhoeffer Christ *is* reality. Reality does not simply indicate that "what you see is what you get," when looking at the world. Rather, we know what is real in the world, as well as what is true and good, by looking to Christ and by being in relationship to Christ. One of Bonhoeffer's phrases, one Paul Lehmann especially liked to quote, is that Christians are called to discern "the significant in the factual." We certainly have to look at the facts of this world, that is, we must acknowledge clearly the events that are going on around us. Facts alone, however, do not constitute reality. As Christians, who understand that Jesus Christ is reality, we look for what is significant in those events.

Once this christological foundation of Bonhoeffer's ethic is understood, one begins to discover why Bonhoeffer claims that responsible Christian action is defined by our relationship to Christ, and *not* by following an absolute moral law. Bonhoeffer's ethic, therefore, is best understood as consistent with what some have called a "contextual" ethic.

THREE TYPES OF ETHICS AND TRUTH TELLING

We can best understand Bonhoeffer's ethic by situating it within a typology that describes three general approaches to Christian ethics: an ethic of absolute law, a utilitarian ethic, and a contextual ethic.⁷ In what follows each of these three types will be described, truth telling will be used as an illustration of how each can operate, and the strengths and weaknesses of each will be identified. Finally, Bonhoeffer's ethic will be placed under the third type.

A. An Ethic of Absolute Law

The first type of ethic affirms the absolute character of moral law. Some Christians believe that there are certain absolutes that one follows in every case with no or few exceptions. These absolute laws are derived from a variety of sources, for example, the Old and New Testaments, human reason and experience, and ecclesiastical tradition. These laws are absolutely binding and are universal, that is, they apply in every situation. They are given to us by God to promote action among human beings that is consistent with the divine will.

1. *Absolute law and truth telling.* Corrie ten Boom's book *The Hiding Place* describes a Christian Dutch family who spent a great deal of energy at great personal cost hiding Jews from the Nazi soldiers who occupied Holland.

⁷ This is a modified form of H. Richard Niebuhr's typology. Niebuhr identifies the three types of ethics as deontological, teleological, and an ethic of response. See H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

According to Corrie ten Boom she and her sister, Nollie, "had known from childhood that the earth opened and the heavens rained fire upon liars,"⁸ yet each responded differently to the need to lie in order to preserve their own lives and the lives of others. While Corrie ten Boom could look an army clerk straight in the eye and lie about the number of radios in her house, her sister believed that one could never lie under any circumstance.

The sisters' resistance to the German occupation of Holland included hiding Nollie's sons, Peter and Bob, to prevent their induction into the army's work force. In Nollie's house a trapdoor under the kitchen table led to a potato cellar where the boys could hide from the *Razzien*, the searches and seizures in which young men were captured from their homes. Corrie ten Boom gives the following account:

We were chatting in the kitchen . . . when all at once Peter and his older brother, Bob, raced into the room their faces white.

"Soldiers! Quick! They're two doors down and coming this way!"

They jerked the table back, snatched away the rug and tugged open the trapdoor. Bob lowered himself first, lying down flat, and Peter tumbled in on top of him. We dropped the door shut, yanked the rug over it and pulled the table back in place. With trembling hands [we] threw a long tablecloth over it and started laying five places for tea.

There was a crash in the hall as the front door burst open. . . . Two uniformed Germans ran into the kitchen, rifles levelled.

"Stay where you are. Do not move." . . .

The soldiers glanced around disgustedly at this room filled with women and one old man. . . .

"Where are your men?" the shorter soldier asked Cocky [Peter and Bob's sister] in clumsy, thick-accented Dutch. . . . "Where are your brothers?"

Cocky stared at him a second, then dropped her eyes. My heart stood still. I knew how Nollie had trained her children—but surely, surely now of all times a lie was permissible! . . .

"The oldest one is at the Theological College. He doesn't get home most nights because—"

"What about the other two?"

Cocky did not miss a breath.

"Why, they're under the table."

⁸ Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place* (Washington Depot, CT: Chosen Books, 1971), p. 66.

Nollie ten Boom and her daughter, Cocky, believed that Christians are always to tell the truth no matter what the situation. According to Corrie ten Boom, "Peter and Bob, from the viewpoint of the trapdoor, weren't so sure."⁹ Nevertheless, the soldiers interpreted the comment as sarcasm. "Don't take us for fools!" one of them snarled, and according to Corrie ten Boom, strode furiously from the room taking the entire squad with him.

A student in one of my classes has rightly pointed out that any ethicist who takes seriously the absolute character of moral law would never acknowledge that telling the truth in such a way that you actually intend to deceive really constitutes telling the truth. She believes that this story, therefore, does not constitute a fair representation of this approach to ethics. At the level of ethics as an academic discipline, she is right. I believe, however, that this illustration accurately portrays a dilemma that many Christians face when they attempt to abide by the absolute nature of the moral law. They sometimes find themselves caught in difficult situations, where following the law would cause so much damage that they try to follow the letter of the law, while hoping that the opposite of what they are doing will indeed happen.

2. *Strengths and weaknesses of an ethic of absolute law.* One can identify at least two strengths of an ethic of absolute law. First, people who adhere to the absolute character of the law are reliable people. I had a friend who, following the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, believed that one must always tell the truth and must never rely on breaking promises or telling a lie. He was a reliable person. You knew that when he told you something, it was, to the best of his knowledge, the truth. Although he was not always a fun person to have around, for he often told you far more of the truth than you really wanted to hear, he was as trustworthy and reliable a friend as I have ever had.

A second strength of this approach to ethics is that it clarifies right action. One acts without hesitation, knowing clearly that this is the right way to proceed. One never has to stop and ponder, "Should I break a promise just this once? Could I stretch the truth in just this small way?" Knowing what the moral law says for Christians identifies what we are duty-bound to do without equivocation.

There are three potential weaknesses involved in this approach to ethics. First, it can be overly simplistic. It fails at times to take account of the enormous complexities of life. In a situation such as that described by Corrie ten Boom where people are demanding the location of others whom they mean to destroy it seems difficult to reconcile the divine will with the moral law. Life is complicated; it is not always clear that following the law is consistent with God's will.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 87-88.

Second, applying the moral law in an absolute manner can lead to cruel behavior toward others whenever the law claims more importance than our relationship with our neighbor. Sometimes we follow the law in order to clear our own conscience so that we can say, "I did what was right; my conscience is clear," when in reality we have bought our clear conscience at the expense of others who must suffer for what we have done or failed to do. In such cases how can we rest easy in the fact that our consciences are clear, that we did the right thing by following the law?

Finally, Bonhoeffer believes that a serious weakness of an ethic of absolute law is that it can proceed apart from our relationship with Christ. Once you have the rules, whether you've found them in the Bible or discovered them from other sources, then you know what you ought to do. Doing the right thing no longer requires being in right relationship to Christ; it only requires having the right rules.

B. *A Utilitarian Ethic*

A second approach to ethics, utilitarianism, evaluates moral action by looking at the consequences of action. Here the absolute character of law is rejected in favor of seeking to produce the greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people.¹⁰ Although some utilitarians set out to formulate moral law based on the utilitarian principle, most are situational, looking for how one can produce the greatest amount of good in each particular situation. If the consequences of an action are good then the action itself is morally defensible. Hence, there arises the phrase, "The end justifies the means." Once one has identified the supreme good (e.g., happiness, agape, justice), any action that serves that goal is justified, including telling a lie. There tends, therefore, to be no concept of "necessary evil" (i.e., having to choose a reprehensible action because there seems to be no other recourse); if an action promotes the greater good, that action in itself is good.

1. *Utilitarianism and truth telling.* In 1966 Joseph Fletcher made a utilitarian form of Christian ethics very popular in his widely read book, *Situation Ethics*, which is still in print.¹¹ He says in that book that if lying serves a positive good then the lying itself is not even something we would consider a necessary evil, but is in itself a good. If by telling a lie you save somebody's life or if by telling a lie you produce something good for other people then you would never consider asking for forgiveness for having told the lie. Rather, the lie itself is a positive good if it has good consequences.

¹⁰ See John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, ed. George Sher (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1957).

¹¹ Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966).

2. *Strengths and weaknesses of a utilitarian ethic.* The strength of a utilitarian ethic is located in its practical approach to solving moral dilemmas. It appeals to that practical nature that I believe often characterizes the American spirit. When I walked around the halls of Union Seminary in New York there were clocks all over campus that didn't work. I found that looking at these clocks over a number of months began to add to the frustration of my days. I wanted to say to those in charge, "Fix them or throw them out." This reflects the attitude promoted by utilitarianism in terms of moral action: If a particular action "works" obviously that is the right action to take. If it doesn't work try something else. None of us can ignore something of this practical consideration in moral decision making as even scripture counsels that "no one sets out to build a tower without first sitting down to count the cost" (Lk. 14:28). We must at times think in terms of the pragmatic, practical consequences of acts.

The weakness of this approach for Christian ethics constitutes the flip side of its strength; Christians in this world are not always called to do what is practical by the world's standards. Sometimes we really are called to do what is foolish according to the world. The wisdom of the world and the wisdom of the cross are not always the same (1 Cor. 1:18-25), so that in some situations we might actually set out to do something that we know is likely to fail and yet still believe that our Christian sense of responsibility and identity demands such an action.

C. *A Contextual Ethic*

The third type of ethics is called "contextual ethics" by Paul Lehmann. The term "contextual" sometimes causes confusion among those who read the works of both Paul Lehmann and Joseph Fletcher, who used the term "situation ethics." Because these terms sound so similar and because both approaches to ethics deny the absolute character of the moral law, many thought that Paul Lehmann and Joseph Fletcher were saying the same thing. But, they were not saying the same thing at all!

A contextual ethic (or ethic of response as H. Richard Niebuhr called it) denies that Christians become responsible by discerning and following an absolute moral law. As Bonhoeffer pointed out one can follow the absolute law without reference to Jesus Christ; once the law is known and followed our relationship with Christ is no longer necessary for Christian decision making in moral matters. A Christian contextual ethic, on the other hand, is at its heart relational, emphasizing our relationship to Christ and to our neighbor. Although it does not ignore the responsibility of the individual, it emphasizes the communal nature of Christian moral life. We are to act in

accordance with the moral community (the church), which shapes our identity through the forming of character (Stanley Hauerwas), the nurturing of Christian maturity (Lehmann), or by conforming us into the image of Christ (Bonhoeffer).¹² God in Jesus Christ tells us who we are; out of that sense of identity we know what we are to do. Moral law is not rejected altogether but is, as Paul Lehmann claims, understood descriptively—not prescriptively—because it describes God's reality in the world. We are, therefore, to live conformed to the image of Christ, not conformed to the letter of the law.

1. *Contextual ethics and truth telling.* In his essay "What Is Meant by 'Telling the Truth?'," Bonhoeffer claims that truth telling, contrary to what we often think, does not mean correspondence between what we say and what actually happened. This literalistic understanding constitutes a wooden interpretation of truth telling and overlooks the dynamic and relational character of truth. Bonhoeffer does not, however, throw out the concept of giving a factual account of the truth. He would never say with Joseph Fletcher that if telling a lie has good consequences then the lie doesn't really matter. "Every word I utter," he says, "is subject to the requirement that it shall be true."¹³ But, he says, there is a truth that is of Satan. That truth may tell accurately what happened, but it does so in hatred of the real. (The real, as you recall, is Jesus Christ.) Such truth telling may accurately say what happened but does so in hatred of the real and in hatred of the world that God has created and saved and continues to sustain. For Bonhoeffer a lie is not just failing to say accurately what happened or failing to express accurately what you know; a lie is the denial of God and of what God has spoken and done in Jesus Christ. Truth telling is, therefore, as with everything else in Bonhoeffer's ethic, relational, that is, based on our relationship with Christ and on our relationship with one another.

Bonhoeffer provides a compelling example of the relational character of truth telling and of how indicating what is factual does not necessarily mean that one has spoken the truth:

For example, a teacher asks a child in front of the class whether it is true that his father often comes home drunk. It is true, but the child denies it. The teacher's question has placed him in a situation for which he is not yet

¹² Stanley Hauerwas refers to character and virtue throughout his many publications; see, e.g., *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). Paul Lehmann refers to Christian Maturity in *Ethics in a Christian Context* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 53-56, 219-23. Bonhoeffer refers to Christian formation in Christ in *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 80-85.

¹³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "What Is Meant by 'Telling the Truth?'" in *Ethics*, p. 365. For those who have not studied Bonhoeffer before, this essay on truth telling provides a very good place to begin.

prepared. He feels only that what is taking place is an unjustified interference in the order of the family and that he must oppose it. What goes on in the family is not for the ears of the class in school. The family has its own secret and must preserve it. The teacher has failed to respect the reality of this institution. The child ought now to find a way of answering which would comply with both the rules of the family and the rules of the school. But he is not yet able to do this. He lacks experience, knowledge and the ability to express himself in the right way. As a simple no to the teacher's question the child's answer is certainly untrue; yet at the same time it nevertheless gives expression to the truth that the family is an institution *sui generis* and that the teacher has no right to interfere in it. The child's answer can indeed be called a lie; yet this lie contains more truth, that is to say, it is more in accordance with reality than would have been the case if the child had betrayed his father's weakness in front of the class. According to the measure of his knowledge, the child acted correctly. The blame for the lie falls back entirely upon the teacher.¹⁴

One must note that Bonhoeffer himself has missed something of the complexity of the illustration he has invoked. Whenever this illustration is discussed by seminarians in my class, students inevitably and correctly point out that one of the requirements of children of alcoholics is that they lie to save their family. They are required to pretend that everything is all right. Such a child would not dream of telling an adult—even one who cares deeply for the child, “Yes, my father drinks too much. Yes, our family is in trouble.” The child is required to protect the family and the family system in all its complexities even though such protection does not in reality protect the child at all. Students are rightly disturbed that Bonhoeffer says without qualification that one would support the child's need to lie. One can also criticize Bonhoeffer's reasoning that in such a case one arena (the classroom) has no right to intrude upon another (the family). Here Bonhoeffer is relying on his understanding of divine mandates, which we cannot here pursue.

In spite of these criticisms one can be true to Bonhoeffer's argument while at the same time maintaining that there are situations where in private a kind teacher could ask out of concern for that child, “Is this true of your family, and what can I do?” in a way that would invite right relationship between that teacher and the student and so in a manner that would serve the truth. The primary point of Bonhoeffer's illustration is that “the usual definition of the lie as a conscious discrepancy between thought and speech is completely

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 367-68.

inadequate."¹⁵ Rather, "the lie is primarily the denial of God as He has evidenced Himself to the world."¹⁶

In the account provided by Corrie ten Boom regarding whether one should tell the truth to the Nazi soldiers, one could argue that giving an accurate account of the facts would serve the bigger lie of the system that the soldiers were trying to support. In reality they have no right to ask the question.¹⁷ Refusing to reveal where the young men were could not necessarily be dismissed as having told a lie. One must look at the complexities of the entire context to discern "the significant in the factual" and to determine what it means to act in conformity to Jesus Christ, which is not necessarily the same as determining what it means to act in conformity with the moral law.

2. *Strengths and weaknesses of a contextual ethic.* In a contextual ethic the cruelties of legalism that at times can characterize an ethic of law are avoided. The calculating pragmatism of utilitarianism, which can lead Christians away from the foolishness of Christ crucified, is avoided. The strength of this ethic lies in its ability to wed Christian morality to the whole person. Moral action is not reduced to following specific laws nor to making decisions in hard cases. Rather, it emphasizes the moral character and development of the person. Furthermore, it acknowledges the complexities of human existence by refusing to look closely at the events taking place in each particular situation.

The weakness of this approach to ethics is consistently identified by its opponents as a lack of clarity. If one eschews the absolute moral law as well as consequences for evaluating the morality of an action, then how does one know what one is to do? The Christian contextualist, of course, believes that discernment has always been a critical aspect of every form of ethics and is necessary for this one as well. In fact, the cultivation of discernment whereby we learn how to "test the spirits" is a critical responsibility of the church.¹⁸

As we continue our study of Bonhoeffer's theology and ethics we need to ask ourselves what best serves the church in today's world: the clarity of absolute laws? the practicality of the utilitarian focus on consequences? or, this more complex give and take of emphasizing our relationship with Christ and the neighbor, as well as the particular context to which we have in the providence of God been led?

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 368.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 369.

¹⁷ For Paul Lehmann's discussion of truth telling see *Ethics in a Christian Context*, pp. 124-32.

¹⁸ 1 Jn. 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." Christopher Morse has built his systematic theology on this idea of "testing the spirits." See his recent book, *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Psalms

by PATRICK D. MILLER

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ABOUT A MONTH after being imprisoned, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the following words to his mother and father:

I read the Psalms every day, as I have done for years; I know them and love them more than any other book. I cannot now read Psalms 3, 47, 70, and others without hearing them in the settings by Heinrich Schütz.¹

His reference to reading the Psalms daily for years is not to be taken lightly. Not only did he carry out and lead in disciplines of morning and evening reading of the Psalms at Finkenwalde and elsewhere, but he refers to the Psalms so often and so familiarly that one can only assume a kind of deep knowledge and interior appropriation that comes from constant time spent with the Psalter.

Bonhoeffer's collected writings have a number of meditations and homilies on the Psalms. Indeed, a perusal of the whole corpus of Bonhoeffer's work, or at least that much presently gathered in his collected writings, makes one immediately aware that while he is best known to us as a theologian and ethicist—at least in terms of his writings—he was a constant reader and interpreter of the Bible. The dialogue between scripture and theology, between biblical interpreters and systematic and historical theologians, is a fairly quiet, if not mute, one in our time. But that was not the case for Bonhoeffer any more than it was for Barth. He lived and thought out of the deep well of scripture. His biblical interpretation has not been taken very seriously by biblical scholars, whose attachment to historical-critical methods has kept them from seeing how Bonhoeffer read the text not literally but seriously and saw in it constantly a witness to Jesus Christ.

That is certainly clear in his writing and preaching on the Psalms, as illustrated in a sermon preached June 2, 1935 on Psalm 42,² one of the most profound of the biblical laments, the Psalm that begins:

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison: The Enlarged Edition*, ed. Eberhard Bethge (London: SCM Press, 1971), p. 40.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Exaudi-Predigt über Psalm 42," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, vol. 4 (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), pp. 391-99. For an English translation of this sermon, see *Meditating on the Word*, ed. and trans. David McL. Gracie (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1986), pp. 64-72.

As pants the hart for living streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.

Bonhoeffer understood first that such wrenching and agonizing cries for help, compared in this song to the longing of a thirsty stag (Bonhoeffer asked his hearers if they had ever heard on a cold winter night the penetrating cry of a stag that makes the whole forest tremble), are not cast into the darkness but are sent to the God whose help and nearness have been known already, the God who has already revealed God's self to us.³ For Bonhoeffer, however, there was no way of talking about that apart from the revelation in Jesus Christ. So if the Psalms speak of the living God, of seeing the face of God, which is, according to Psalm 42, "the goal of all life and eternal life" (so Bonhoeffer), there is no question for him as to where we see the face of God: "We see it in Jesus Christ, the crucified," the one who says, "Whoever thirsts, come to me and drink" (Jn. 7:37).⁴ When people say to the one in trouble and suffering, "Where is your God"—as they do in Psalm 42—and nothing but death and sin, need and war are visible, we can answer, Bonhoeffer claimed, by pointing to the one who in his life, death, and resurrection shows himself to be God's true Son, Jesus Christ. "He is in death our life, in sin our forgiveness, in need our help, in war our peace."⁵

One needs to hear such a sermon fully, of course. There is no simplistic or mechanical reading of Jesus Christ into every word of the Psalm. The Psalm is a cry to God of one of God's suffering chosen ones. Bonhoeffer knew that this was a dialogue of the soul with God. In response to the question of those who taunt the psalmist and say, "Where is now your God?" Bonhoeffer responds in his sermon:

I confess him before the world and before all the enemies of God—when I trust in the deepest need in God's goodness, in [my] guilt in forgiveness, in death in [God's] life, in defeat in [God's] victory, in loneliness in God's gracious presence.⁶

But all of that ground of trust was for Bonhoeffer so completely discernible in Jesus Christ that he could not speak of it in any other way. So he goes on to say in this sermon, in language that anticipates the seemingly more radical

³ *Gesammelte Schriften*, 4:391. Throughout this essay, English translations from the *Gesammelte Schriften* are my own.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:392.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:393.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4:398.

view of the way of the Christian in the world that we hear in the letters and papers from prison, these words: "Who has found God in the cross of Jesus Christ knows how wonderfully God conceals himself in this world, and how he is most closely there exactly where we believe him to be the farthest away."⁷ So his final words of the sermon on Psalm 42 are simple and a kind of bottom line: "Dein Heil heisst Jesus Christus"—Your salvation is named Jesus Christ.⁸

I have taken a single Psalm as illustration of Bonhoeffer's serious reading of the Psalms. It shows, however, how fully they articulate the human need for Bonhoeffer and how specifically they point him to Jesus Christ. Such a way of reading and hearing the Psalms permeates his work, both in the individual sermons or studies on the Psalms and in his two more extended treatments of them, both actually rather brief studies by today's publishing standards, the small volume *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*,⁹ a study of the Psalter as a whole with particular attention to its theological themes, and his "Meditations on Psalm 119."¹⁰

His "Meditations on Psalm 119" are worth our attention. It probably surprises us to learn from Bethge's biography of Bonhoeffer that this interminably repetitious Psalm that goes on for 176 verses, primarily in praise of God's law, a Psalm that is little read by anyone in the church, was the biblical text "most frequently quoted by Bonhoeffer."¹¹ Bonhoeffer himself had learned at the university that this was the most boring of Psalms; yet at the seminary at Finkenwalde, he incorporated Psalm 119 and other Psalms in praise of the law into the daily prayers of the students. Bethge remarks that when Bonhoeffer turned to write his meditations on Psalm 119, which only reached verse 21 out of the 176 verses, "he regarded its interpretation as the climax of his theological life."¹²

Why that is so, one can only speculate. But two or three things are worth noting about this fierce interest in the least interesting of the Psalms. One is that Bonhoeffer seems to have been trying to deal with the negative dimension of the law as it was understood in much of Lutheranism and was drawn

⁷ Ibid., 4:398.

⁸ Ibid., 4:398.

⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1970).

¹⁰ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Meditationen über Psalm 119," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 4:505-43. For an English translation, see *Meditating on the Word*, pp. 103-45.

¹¹ Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Courage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 335.

¹² Ibid., p. 571.

to a more covenantal understanding of law and grace or law and gospel, in the manner of Karl Barth. In so doing, he was also drawn to a perception of the law more true to its place in the Old Testament. Law was not for Bonhoeffer a curse and a killer, that which convicts us and shows us our need for redemption. It was itself the fruit of redemption. His understanding of the law was fully consistent with the Torah of the scriptures. When, in his Meditation on Psalm 119, Bonhoeffer asks, "What is that 'law'?" his answer is the one Israel was told to give to their children when they ask what is the meaning of these statutes and ordinances. It is not a legal interpretation or exposition but the story of redemption:

When your children ask you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord our God has commanded you?" then you shall say to your children, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (Deut. 6:20).¹³

Bonhoeffer writes:

To the question about the law of God, the answer that comes is not a moral teaching, a norm, but an accomplished deed of God. If we ask how we could begin a life with God, scripture answers that God already long ago began the life with us.¹⁴

Here Bonhoeffer has understood the Old Testament profoundly. It is no accident that he develops this sense in relation to Psalm 119 and its associated Psalms, 1 and 19. For these are the biblical texts that tell us that God's law is not heavy and burdensome, not impossible and killing, but sweet and rewarding, delightful to study and to keep, the source of blessing and not curse.

I would suggest that already here we are encountering that love for the Old Testament, the sense of how the Old Testament speaks to life in this world in an affirming way, that is so noticeable in Bonhoeffer's last letters from prison where he cautions about getting to the New Testament too quickly without hearing the Old, where God is to be found in the center of life and life is lived very much in this world, where we hear the Bible speak about health, fortune, vigor, and passion. The lines that lead from Bonhoeffer's "Meditations on Psalm 119," written in 1939-40, to the reflections on

¹³ *Gesammelte Schriften*, 4:508.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4:509.

the Old Testament in the *Letters and Papers from Prison* are clear. We make a mistake, I think, if we read these prison words about the worldliness of the Old Testament as simply the fruit of a life that was now constrained and yearning for the enjoyments of life that were cut off by prison walls. The ground for this way of thinking had been laid long before. So in the "Meditations on Psalm 119," Bonhoeffer writes:

It is God's will that those who walk in his commandments go well. It is no sign of a strong and ripe faith if this sentence causes embarrassment, if we say God has greater things to do with us than to care for our well-being. There are Christians who would be more spiritual than God.¹⁵

This perspective on the law is very much present in Bonhoeffer's other extended study of the Psalms, titled *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*. There is much there that one could talk about, but I want to pick up one prominent feature, one question Bonhoeffer asks, the answer to which will lead us back to prison and death. In this book, Bonhoeffer asks the question: "Who prays the Psalms?" and answers: "David . . . prays, Christ prays, we pray."¹⁶ More specifically he asks: "How is it possible for a [person] and Jesus Christ to pray the Psalter together?" He answers this way:

It is the incarnate Son of God, who has borne every human weakness in his own flesh, who here pours out the heart of all humanity before God and who stands in our place and prays for us. He has known torment and pain, guilt and death more deeply than we. Therefore it is the prayer of the human nature assumed by him which comes here before God. It is really our prayer, but since he knows us better than we know ourselves and since he himself was [truly human] for our sakes, it is also really his prayer, and it can become our prayer only because it was his prayer.¹⁷

It is just this incarnational sense about the Psalms that led the New Testament writers so often to see in them the chief clue for understanding the meaning of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Such an understanding of the Psalms takes us back to Bonhoeffer's words about them in the letters from prison. In the letter to his parents that I quoted at the beginning, Bonhoeffer had some quite specific words to say about how the Psalms spoke to him in his confinement. He wrote:

¹⁵ Ibid., 4:511.

¹⁶ *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, p. 21.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 20-21.

One of my predecessors here has scribbled over the cell door, "In 100 years it will all be over." That was his way of trying to counter the feeling that life spent here is a blank; but there is a great deal that might be said about that, and I should like to talk it over with father. "My time is in your hands" (Ps. 31) is the Bible's answer. But in the Bible there is also the question that threatens to dominate everything here: "How long, O Lord?" (Ps. 13).¹⁸

The answer—"My time is in your hands"—and the question—"How long, O Lord?"—that Bonhoeffer heard so clearly in his particular situation are the answer and the question that are at the heart of biblical prayer as we encounter it in the Psalms: the confident trust that, come what may, we are kept in the hands of a loving God, sustained by the everlasting arms, and the despairing wonder if this suffering will ever end, a wonder that Bonhoeffer knew full well was—in its questioning form—a direct complaint against God. Between such unflinching trust in God's sustaining care in the worst of human pain and hurt and such agonizing questioning of God's presence and power—how long must I endure this pain, how long will you be far from me—is where the movement of the Psalms takes place. It is never certain whether the question or the answer will be first, whether one trusts the starting point in which the cry can leap forth or the ultimate outcome for the one who has cried out to and against God. Bonhoeffer knew well also that this movement between trust and despair, between answer and question, has its greatest concreteness for Christian existence in the passion of Christ, where the cry and complaint to God is there on the lips of the dying Jesus, "My God, my God, *why* have you forsaken me?" "Lord, how long?" But also, in his dying moments, we hear Jesus' words of trust from that same thirty-first Psalm that Bonhoeffer refers to in prison: "Into your hands I commit my spirit" (Ps. 31:5).

Here, I submit, is an important clue to how we understand an apparent contradiction in Bonhoeffer's reading and interpretation of the Old Testament and, more particularly, the Psalms. I am referring to the tension between, on the one hand, his earlier work exemplified in the sermon on Psalm 42, in which the Psalms—as well as other Old Testament texts—are read so thoroughly in relation to Jesus Christ, so completely as his words or the way in which he teaches us to pray, and, on the other hand, his final letters from prison where he warns against Christians moving too quickly to the New Testament without hearing the Old Testament first and on its own terms.

¹⁸ *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 39.

Those of us who teach the Old Testament tend to be more at home with the view of the later Bonhoeffer and applaud his apparent coming around to seeing things correctly after being caught up earlier in an overly christological reading of the Psalms.

But I would like now to dissent from that way of responding to Bonhoeffer and to argue that there is a consistency and continuity in his interpretation of the Psalms. His vigorous claiming of the Old Testament's focus on earthly life and blessing and his growing resistance to a move to the New Testament that risks spiritualizing our life in this world are not apart from his conviction that in Jesus Christ we gain the meaning of all of scripture. In a chapter of the little book on the Psalms as prayerbook, Bonhoeffer calls for the congregation's regular reading and praying of the Psalms, going through the Psalter over and over, not only in the liturgy but in daily devotion. He justifies this in part out of the tradition of the constant singing of the Psalms in the early church. But then he says these words: "Yet more important than all of this is the fact that Jesus died on the cross with the words of the Psalter on his lips."¹⁹ Here is where the Old Testament's concrete attention to life in this world with all its suffering and its blessing is joined with what the God of Israel has done in Jesus Christ. The praying of the Psalms by the dying Jesus is the chief ground for our taking them up as *our* prayers. When, at a much later time, Bonhoeffer finds *himself* at the cross, the imitation of Christ will be clear to him, prepared long before. The Psalms were the prayers of a suffering and dying Christ. For Bonhoeffer, for whom that was the most important thing to say about the Psalms, the most important reason for our praying them, the ground had already been laid for the way in which he would go to his own death, hearing in these words the faithful prayer of the sufferer, being given in these Psalms the appropriate prayer for the disciple who walks the way of the cross his Master walked before him.

There is one final matter to lift up in Bonhoeffer's personal and theological interaction with the Psalms. It has to do again with the way in which Bonhoeffer interpreted the Psalms in his life as well as in his thinking and speaking. Perhaps one should even speak of the Psalms interpreting him. Here I am completely indebted to Eberhard Bethge and an essay whose fundamental point I want to set before you in closing.²⁰

¹⁹ *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, p. 26.

²⁰ Eberhard Bethge, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer unter den Verstummten?" in *Erstes Gebot und Zeitgeschichte: Aufsätze und Reden, 1980-1990* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1991), pp. 100-11. English translations from this essay are my own.

In the context of the fortieth anniversary of the *Kristallnacht*, the infamous night of the pogrom that began the physical annihilation of the Jews, Bethge wondered where Bonhoeffer was on that evening, or more specifically, where he stood and how he had responded to that terrible event. He wondered about the response of the Bonhoeffer who had written an earlier essay on "The Church before the Jewish Question" and had said, in 1935, "Only the one who cries out for the Jews may also sing Gregorian chants."²¹

Seeking to answer that question, Bethge reports what he found out. It was not very much, only a couple of pencilled remarks and a note in the Bible from which Bonhoeffer read each day. That brief note is written in his Bible at Psalm 74:8-11 where we read, roughly translating what was in Bonhoeffer's German text:

They speak in their hearts: "Let us plunder them!" They burn all the houses of God in the land. Our signs we do not see, and no longer does any prophet proclaim, and there is no one among us who knows how long. O God, how long shall the foe scoff and the enemy revile your name forever? Why do you turn aside your hand? Draw forth your right hand from your bosom and make an end."²²

Drawing some lines alongside these verses in his Bible, Bonhoeffer wrote in the margin simply the date "9.11.38," with exclamation marks. That was, of course, the date of the Crystal Night pogrom. Bethge assumes that Bonhoeffer came upon this Psalm in the regular praying of the Psalms, which they did each morning and evening in the seminary, and that there came to him this shattering awareness of the loneliness of the despairing Jews in the pogrom over two thousand years before when the Babylonians destroyed the temple and deported the people. But now, for Bonhoeffer, under the burden of a solidarity he felt with the despairing cries of the Jews on that Crystal Night of the later pogrom, the lament, "O God, how long?" impressed itself upon him, apparently—Bethge thinks—with a very personal connection, to wit, "O God, how long can I stand by and simply watch?"²³

Of all the many lines marking passages in his Bible and notes connecting to other passages, this is the only reference to a political or personally important datum. Ten days after the Crystal Night horror, Bonhoeffer wrote in a circular letter to former seminarians at Finkenwalde this sentence: "In

²¹ Ibid., p. 101.

²² Ibid., p. 104.

²³ Ibid., p. 104.

the last days, I have reflected much on Psalm 74, Zechariah 2:12, Romans 9:3f., and 11:11-15. That leads one very much into prayer.”²⁴ The Zechariah passage reads: “Who touches you, touches the apple of his eye.” Bethge thinks that the praying going on in Bonhoeffer was about the cost of his calling, whether he could continue without acting in a way that would demonstrate his solidarity with the Jews. The “How long?” of the Psalm must have been translated for Bonhoeffer into several questions: How long before the pogrom ends? What role does this mean for me? What will it cost us that Christians have let things come to the event of November 9?²⁵

Bethge is clear in his mind that the response to the question of the Psalm, “How long?” is found in the form of Bonhoeffer’s entry into the political conspiracy against Hitler, whose outcome had its end at Flossenbürg with Bonhoeffer’s execution.²⁶ Here then, one might argue, is the decisive interpretive move that Bonhoeffer made as one who read and studied the Psalms, an act of solidarity with the despairing and God-forsaken Jews in November 1938, a solidarity rooted in his reflection on the earlier pogrom against the Jews of which Psalm 74 speaks, a solidarity with the Jews that joined him with them even unto death.

In the light of the musical celebration that lies before us this evening and tomorrow, we would be remiss if we did not notice that, for Bonhoeffer, the Psalms were to be sung and played. He frequently refers to singing them or listening to Bethge and others sing them. And in that letter to his mother with which I began, he says that when he reads Psalms 3, 47, and 70, he always seems to hear them in the settings of Schütz. The Psalms are music as much as they are prayer. Bonhoeffer heard them as music in his head even when he could not hear them actually sung and played. As such, he calls us to remember that the Psalms are less to be talked about than they are to be sung and played. True to his legacy and his own appropriation of the Psalms, in the rest of this weekend the music of the Psalter will fill the air. Bonhoeffer might not have come to this lecture. But he surely would be here tonight and tomorrow.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-10.

No Devils Left in Hell

by DONALD C. MULLEN

Donald C. Mullen, M.D., a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Director of Samaritan's Purse/World Medical Mission, preached this sermon at Sunrise Presbyterian Church on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina on July 3, 1994.

Texts: Psalm 46

Romans 8:18-39

THE MISSIONARY'S comment in *Time* on the situation in Rwanda told the story in a nutshell: "There are no devils left in Hell. They are all in Rwanda." I have worked in three war zones in the past three years. I have lived through many wars in my lifetime and struggled not only with their horrors but also with their justification.

The questions always come up: Why such things? Why the holocaust in Europe? Why the genocide in Bosnia? Why the genocide in Rwanda? What we are talking about here is evil, my friends; it's wholesale murder of the masses! Whatever one wants to call it, it is evil—"There are no devils left in Hell!"

And in our own time we have never seen such a sudden burst of evil as we have now seen in Rwanda. We cannot call it animal. It is far worse than that. Animals do not kill their own species in such numbers: over a half million people slaughtered in just two months. These atrocities cannot be blamed on animal instinct. What we are seeing is distinctly human and distinctly evil, but, unfortunately, part of our fallen humanity. It is part of the human condition.

Two months ago I stood on a bridge just below Kusumu Falls on the Kagera River, the border between Rwanda and Tanzania. We were the advance logistical team looking for a place to bring a medical team to the refugees. I looked with horror from that bridge down into the eddies below this beautiful waterfall. I saw dozens of bloated, decaying bodies—many headless, many limbless, many small children—floating lifelessly on top of the water, a surrealistic truth of "man's inhumanity to man" incredibly magnified right before my very eyes. Fifty thousand bodies had reached beautiful Lake Victoria! I stared in outrage and revulsion, and I cried. The feel of evil permeated this horrible scene . . . and it was overwhelming.

Several weeks later we received word in Nairobi that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had given Samaritan's Purse/World Medical Mission permission to come into northern Rwanda to work in a refugee camp near the capital city of Kigale. We were the first American team given that opportunity.

We had thirty-six hours of scrambling preparation. The President of Kenya gave us permission to fly. On a Sunday morning late in May we were in the air with three chartered aircraft, twelve medical-team members, and several tons of supplies and equipment.

If you have ever seen the movie "Out of Africa" and remember the flights made by Robert Redford's character, you will understand the beauty of the continent—hills, mountains, burned-out volcanoes, lakes and landscapes of enormous beauty. In many such small aircraft flights over this incredible continent in the last few months we have seen God's beautiful creation . . . a beautiful creation—in the midst of human atrocities.

We landed on a dirt strip in Uganda about two hours from the Rwandan border. Trucks were waiting to carry us the rest of the way to our small hotel in the border town of Kabale, Uganda, which would be our staging area.

The next morning we began our drive into Rwanda. As we crossed the border in our three-truck convoy, one could sense the tension. We met no other vehicles in our drive south; the road was empty: no people . . . no sounds . . . no birds . . . no animals . . . only silence, the silence of death, the unmistakable presence of evil. And occasionally we would smell the results of that evil—the odor of death. An eerie feeling . . . once again we were in that surrealistic zone of evil! I can assure you it is real; it is incredibly real!

Beautiful mountains terraced and landscaped for growing tea, maize, sorghum, vegetables, crops ready for harvest, farm houses once occupied with busy, happy farm people filled the scene. But there were no people here . . . no laughter . . . no crying . . . only the smell of human death and evil, amid the beauty of creation.

After an hour and a half of driving, accompanied by our RPF guides (the so-called rebels), we arrived at the Rutare camp where the people were gathered together, 100,000 strong, on top of the mountains where there was safety in numbers. They had built makeshift grass huts which covered the hillsides within hearing range of the artillery fire in Kigale. People gathered together with blank stares, in shock over their plight. There was no laughter . . . no crying . . . only the hollow, empty, emotionless faces of fear and shock. Some had lost their entire families.

We had come in hopes of bringing relief to their suffering, but at this point, we felt truly helpless within ourselves. What we and they needed most was help from the power of love that only the Creator of the beauty we had seen during our trip could provide. We felt overwhelmed and powerless.

A small girl of about ten came up to one of our vehicles. She wanted to talk. She told how her mother had been butchered to death before her eyes.

She also told of her father mortally wounded in the hospital. How do you comfort such a child?

Why did all this happen? Those of us who are Christians always have “God” questions in tragedies such as this. Where is God in all this? Is this what God willed? If there is a God of love why did such a tragedy occur? I cannot answer all these “God” questions. But would God, who I believe loves us like a mother and a father, inflict this kind of punishment, this kind of suffering, on innocent people? Some would say that such tragedies are the “will of God” and that “we must have strong religious faith” and accept them humbly! My friends, this is blasphemy! Rwanda was no more the will of God than the vast holocaust of Hitler’s extermination camps was the will of God!

But I do believe the Christian faith gives us insight and guidance even for such hellish experiences as Rwanda. The apostle Paul declares that “we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” We may acknowledge demonic tragedy and yet say that God will be with us in it and through it, and even bring good out of it. The conviction that God can, and does, use and overrule for good the most dreadful deeds does not imply that the deeds themselves are the will of God.

When a little child is run over by a drunken driver, or assaulted by a sexually deranged adult, it is religious hypocrisy (or rather ignorance) for us to suggest a submission to “the will of God.” For God agonizes with us in these tragedies born of evil just as his Son suffered on a cross. We fight against drunken driving, we fight against all kinds of evil perpetrated by humankind upon humankind, and we Christians do so in the name of God because we do not believe God wants that kind of evil. As we face these tragedies in our lives, we come to accept them not only because we must, but because we come to believe with the apostle Paul that in everything, no matter what it is, in everything that happens in our lives, God will be with us giving us grace and strength.

Paul concludes by saying that “I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor depths, nor heights, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Is this not faith? To know that ultimately *no experience* can separate us from God, the God of the cross.

Lest you believe that evil is only in Nazi Germany or Rwanda or Bosnia, think of our own society. The capacity for evil is in all of us wherever we live. Our cities have become a battleground. Without order, they could easily

become a Rwanda. The Ku Klux Klan practices racial violence. Abuse within many homes is rampant. And we, too, could erupt in violence given extreme circumstances.

Yes, there is deep sickness within our society too. I believe we are capable of the kinds of atrocities we read about. Beware of the evil that is within us all. It is the human condition. But it is also the reason for the coming of the Christ! And Christ is the reason for the church. The Crucified is our comfort in times of suffering.

I left Rwanda after the team began treating four to five hundred people daily in the clinic hospital and caring for many orphans. Three weeks later I was back in Rwanda at our camp. The change in the people was remarkable. The kids were playing. The people were smiling. There was bartering again in the marketplace. I attended a church service with people packed into a small bullet-riddled building. They were praising God and singing the most beautiful, harmonized African hymns I have ever heard. God was there. While they could never forget ... never! ... there was the comforting presence of love.

God will not desert the Rwandan people. God will help them. God will strengthen them. God will see them through. And yes, some as yet unknown good will come out of it. That is a faith a person can live by, and I believe it to be a biblical faith. Such a faith, arising from a forsaken cross, is the unexpected power of love. May it run the devils back into hell!

Walter Holmes Eastwood: A Tribute

(April 13, 1906–June 9, 1994)

by JAMES F. ARMSTRONG

James F. Armstrong, Helena Professor of Old Testament Language and Exegesis and Academic Dean of Princeton Theological Seminary, prepared this tribute for Walter H. Eastwood's memorial service, held on July 24, 1994 in Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

WALTER HOLMES EASTWOOD served Princeton Theological Seminary faithfully from 1948 until 1960 as Lecturer in Pastoral Theology. His course in church administration was required of all graduates; hence he became the friend, counselor, and clerical role model for nearly fifteen hundred young ministers during his years at the Seminary. His concern for a pastoral care that was at once individually centered and yet so efficiently organized that large numbers might receive personal attention aroused the enthusiasm and lifted the vision of his students. He implanted in his students ideals for ministry they had never imagined. More importantly, he provided them with an unending series of practical suggestions and concrete details for implementing a well-organized and creative ministry. He stated his goal in his description of his course: "We will together develop methods for the practical application of the ministers' training and talents to meet the needs of the day." Countless alumni/ae attest to his success in achieving that goal.

One of his students who recently returned to the campus for the fortieth anniversary of his graduation in 1954 remarked to his classmates, "I am deeply grateful for all of the Bible and theology I was taught here. It shaped my life. But on the day I began my first pastorate, and on most days since then for forty years, I breathe a prayer of thanks for the suggestions Walter Eastwood gave us on how to manage a church and how to perform the ministry! I still use his notes and copy his handouts." After this man had spoken, it was remarkable how many other alumni/ae of that Class of 1954 joined in heart-felt acknowledgments of their own indebtedness to the work of Walter Eastwood.

Walter Holmes Eastwood was born in Manchester, England on April 13, 1906 and came to this country as a child. He was educated at Parsons College in Fairfield, Iowa and at Princeton Theological Seminary where he received his Bachelor of Theology degree in 1932 and his Master of Theology degree in 1933. He earned the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology from Temple University in 1941. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by both Lafayette and Muhlenberg Colleges.

Upon his ordination in the Presbyterian ministry in 1932, he became the

Stated Supply Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Iselin, New Jersey until 1934. From 1934 until 1937 he was the Assistant Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Norristown, Pennsylvania. In 1937 he was called as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Milton, Pennsylvania where he remained until 1943, when he received a call to become the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Allentown, Pennsylvania. He remained as pastor of that great, growing and ever-demanding congregation for the next twenty-three years. Amid vast honors and outpourings of appreciation, he retired from the Allentown Church in 1966.

It was at a session of the Summer Institute of Theology held at Princeton Seminary in 1947 that President John A. Mackay and Dean Edward H. Roberts heard Walter Eastwood express his passionate appeal for a closer relationship between the academic world of the theological seminary and the practical world of the local congregation. They were convinced by what they heard and engaged Dr. Eastwood, already preoccupied by the demands of a large city church, to come to Princeton and to develop a course in church administration.

The following year, 1948, Dr. Eastwood began his weekly course in church administration, which he devotedly taught for the next twelve years. Neither rain, snow, fog, nor the demands of his church or family prevented him from driving from Allentown to Princeton and back each Monday to share his experience of the ministry with the senior class.

We remember with affection a man who was an authentic Christian and a fine minister and who, as a teacher and thinker, made a vast contribution to the church he loved not only in his lifetime, but through the heritage he left in all those whom he influenced, not the least of whom are hundreds of the alumni/ae of Princeton Theological Seminary. Though dead, he yet speaketh to us in accents clear and strong.

BOOK REVIEWS

Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking the Code: Understanding the Book of Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. Pp. 111. \$6.95.

The Book of Revelation employs symbolism brilliantly to capture the interplay of the heavenly and the earthly in the life of Christian communities of western Asia Minor at the end of the first century. With “disciplined *imagination*” it offers an enduring message of hope to followers of Christ faced with persecution or even extermination by a power that presents itself as supreme. Tragically, no book of scripture is more distorted in media Bible preaching. There, treated as a cryptogram in which the history and characters of the twentieth century are encoded, Revelation is interpreted to have precise references to Saddam Hussein, Gorbachev, the president, and the pope. Probably no amount of sane exegesis will convince devotees of such distortions, but every sound interpretation geared to the general public is a help.

This brief commentary is particularly valuable since it comes from the pen of a man whose meticulous scholarship is acknowledged worldwide and whose respect for the religious value of the New Testament is unquestioned. It is easily understood, attractively written, and gently persuasive—a book that clergy can give to those who are sincerely puzzled by Revelation. Recipients will find sound guidance that is far more spiritual than the much-vaunted detection of hidden prophecies in Revelation. In the past Bruce Metzger has put us in his debt by works of detail and erudition; we are no less in his debt for this truly pastoral gesture.

As for Metzger’s service to his fellow scholars, one cannot read even his popular works without learning. Emphasizing that Revelation describes symbols, not the reality conveyed by the symbols, he offers some very perceptive insights into those symbols. He catches effectively the paradox between being invited to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah in 5:5 and being shown a Lamb that has the marks of being slaughtered. In the heritage of great commentators on Revelation like W. M. Ramsay, Metzger points to events of history like the eruption of Vesuvius that may have catalyzed the seer’s choice of symbols. Yet he is wise enough to acknowledge that at times (e.g., Revelation 11) the interwoven symbols are bewildering.

Revelation 5 expresses the unity of the worship of the church on earth and the church in heaven. I would have been interested to have him push that observation farther and comment on whether the arrangement of the twenty-four elders around the throne of God was suggested to the seer by the arrangement of the earthly assembly. After all, only a decade separates the churches of Revelation from the churches of that same Asia Minor region

addressed by Ignatius, wherein one bishop was accompanied by elders. The two witnesses who lie slain in the street of the great city (Revelation 11) are truly hard to decipher; but in treating this biblical book that uses so much imagery associated with Jerusalem and Rome, one might ask whether Christ's death in Jerusalem and the deaths of Peter and Paul in Rome have not been mingled.

Metzger suggests that since the "John" of Revelation receives no qualifying title, the readers are probably to understand that he is the well-known apostle, John son of Zebedee. Granted that the principle of noncontradiction is not fully operative in apocalyptic symbolism, would the apostle John need to have explained to him the foundation stones of the heavenly Jerusalem inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles? Should we not simply be content with John the seer of Patmos, unidentifiable with any other of that name in the New Testament? In the attempt of the Satanic dragon to devour the messianic child when he is born (12:3-5a) Metzger sees King Herod's endeavor to kill Jesus soon after he was born (at Bethlehem), and then by a surprising condensation of the gospel story a reference to the ascension (12:5b). I would argue that there is no reference to birth at Bethlehem but, as in the Gospel of John (distantly related to Revelation), to the birth of the Messiah through death in which the prince of the world is defeated, followed logically by Jesus' ascension to the Father (John 16:19-21, 33; 20:17). However, these are minor disagreements for friendly dialogue in what is otherwise my very firm affirmation of the way in which this most helpful short commentary interprets Revelation, and a partnership in the battle to have the message of this book freed from misguided eisegesis.

Raymond E. Brown
Union Theological Seminary

Capps, Donald. *The Poet's Gift: Toward the Renewal of Pastoral Care*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 192. \$15.99.

In *The Poet's Gift: Toward the Renewal of Pastoral Care*, Donald Capps holds forth contemporary poets William Stafford and Denise Levertov as pastoral mentors. Capps beseeches pastors to seek beneath the superficial and cliché the abundant treasure in the commonplace, with poetry the means for unearthing the riches. The succinct, open-ended form of poetry reflects the episodic nature of pastoral ministry in a mobile society where "life itself is more parabolic than novelistic." Rather than decry this social reality, Capps presses his conviction that there is often lavish power for healing and transformation precisely in these singular moments—in haphazard events or chance encounters—which serve also as grist for good poetry.

Capps, who is the William Harte Felmeth Professor of Pastoral Theology

at Princeton Theological Seminary, finds in poetry "a source of renewal, not only for the ministry of individual pastors but also for the field of pastoral care itself" (p. 3). In this lofty latter purpose, the book's unassuming style makes all the more compelling its subversive agenda, that of seeking to disavow pastoral theology of its pretensions as science. Instead, extending here his previous interests in Jesus' parables and the biblical wisdom literature to contemporary poetry (although stopping somewhat short of canonizing Stafford and Levertov), Capps provides for the pastoral field a more modest, yet seasoned, foundation. He cites Walter Harrelson: "The wisdom tradition would give us examples of various kinds of conduct and let us learn what we can from such examples. It would give these to us in sharp pictures, deeply etched into the consciousness, taught to us when young, not sprung on us only as needed" (p. 156). The gift in such wisdom is freedom to be the unique person God is calling one to be. After reading this often moving, sometimes quirky, finally compelling and even devastating text, one cannot but conclude that its author is wise and free indeed.

Throughout the book Capps politely steps back to allow the poets full rein. Three chapters introduce the poetry of Stafford. Rescued by his love of words from rather compromised beginnings, Stafford, who died in 1993, was the son of an emotionally moribund mother and a more nurturing, if too quiet father, in a socially outcast family of a small Kansas town. In "The Self We Bring to Our Vocation," Capps considers pastoral identity, the pristine lines of Stafford's poetry reminding pastors that they are *persons* as well. In "Inviting the Grieving Back to Life," Stafford's poetry conveys the freedom that emerges from acknowledging and accepting without rationalization the catastrophe of any deep loss. In "Pastoral Care and the Yearning for Freedom," Capps finds the gracious presence of God in Stafford's "dogged faith in the teaching power of Nature" and in his sense that true freedom comes not from laws or fences but from an unexpected relaxation of the familiar order of things, as well as from "the little ways that encourage good fortune."

Two chapters highlight Levertov's poetry. Raised in suburban London by a Welsh mother and a Russian Jewish father who converted to the Anglican priesthood, Levertov married an American soldier during World War II and moved to New York City. A nurse by training, her gifts for writing poetry won her teaching positions at prestigious American universities, including Stanford, where she has been professor of English since 1981. In "Pastoral Conversation as Embodied Language," Capps appeals to Levertov's "ability to enter the private, inner world of another and express—in words—what the other is experiencing" (p. 47) to redeem nondirective listening from its disembodied caricature, with the pastor as "walking thesaurus": "When our minds take over, when they begin to work apart from and in alienation from our bodies, then we will resort to paraphrasing, to speaking the first synonym

for 'afraid of death' that enters, unmediated by the body, into our minds" (p. 66). In "Learning to Heed the Unheard Voices," Levertov's poetry serves as a vehicle for encountering strangers too long silenced, a meeting likely to blur rigid distinctions between givers and receivers of care. For Capps, Levertov invites the male reader into the world of women's experience, not without rage or anger, nor without hard truths about men, but nonetheless making "every effort to put him at ease." He wonders aloud about those who call for pastoral care to widen its horizons "when we have been unable to hear the voices in our very own midst" (p. 143).

The Poet's Gift cannot be read quickly. The book approaches its ambitious task of renewing pastoral care with a disarming, devotional style. Those who prefer to skip over the vast stretches of its poetry to glean only the threads of Capps' commentary will reap little of its rewards, although such are likely the very readers Capps hopes to win to his call for wise discernment, careful stewardship of words, and protection of the freedom of individuals in pastoral care. The book and Capps' agenda for the pastoral field would be strengthened by a more concerted focus on the person and poetry of Christ; but even as it stands, it is a pearl of great price.

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Fenn, Richard K., and Donald Capps, eds. *The Endangered Self*. Princeton: Center for Religion, Self and Society of Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992. Pp. xvi + 155. \$10.00.

This book is a collection of essays originally presented by eleven scholars at an interdisciplinary conference sponsored by Princeton Theological Seminary's Center for Religion, Self and Society on the topic of the self and its precarious existence in modern American society. The conference was convened to discuss the proposition that selfhood is endangered because our culture overpowers the individual with its demands for socialization, for conformity to institutions (including educational and ecclesiastical), for renunciation of individual needs and desires, and for social "transparency" (e.g., Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, and Oliver Stone). A creative tension infuses the volume, however, in that the paper presenters (who represent such varied fields as religious studies, psychology, theology, women's studies, Jewish studies, and pastoral theology) not surprisingly found themselves divided not only over the issue of whether or not the self is endangered, but also over their definitions of selfhood and their valuations of the risks of endangerment.

The book is divided into three sections in which the various perspectives are loosely organized. Section one, "The Endangered Self and the Endangering Society," contains those papers (by John McDargh, Donald Capps, Janet

L. Jacobs, Trels Norager, and Roger A. Johnson) that affirm the diagnosis of the conveners that the self is in the midst of a struggle for survival—a struggle to maintain or regain individual freedom, to speak meaningfully about itself, and to find God in the process. Section two, “What ‘Self’ is Endangered?” contains five papers (by James E. Dittes, Mary Ellen Ross, Steven Kepnes, Diane Jonte-Pace, and Lynn Poland) that argue that perhaps the “self” is not endangered, but only those definitions of selfhood in which the self is “free and autonomous.” Several of these papers present the post-modern argument that the self exists only in connection with culture, in dialogue with others, or as a creative act. James Dittes revivifies the religious argument that “losing the self” is the only way truly to find it. Section three, “From ‘Endangered Self’ to ‘Soul Loss,’” is Richard Fenn’s summation and expansion of the arguments presented. He advances the disturbing argument that in a society, such as ours, that makes claims on even the most private aspects of individuals’ lives, the self or soul is in danger of being lost altogether.

This volume is an excellent introduction to the psychological and theological issues of selfhood and individualism that are such hot buttons of controversy in current popular and academic discourse. This is technical but highly readable material; probably because of the interdisciplinary nature of the conference, writers seemed to have taken extra care to be understandable and interesting. Readers are given excellent overviews and introductions to current research and thinking on the issue of the “self” and are also introduced to compelling historical figures who have either wrestled with the issues (e.g., Jonathan Edwards, Freud, Jung, Emerson) or embodied them (e.g., the young Jesus struggling with the circumstances of his birth, Christopher Columbus struggling with a sense of calling, and “Robert,” a student who believed he was living another’s life).

On the issue of “selfhood” the volume takes on almost a point/counter-point aspect: Does the self exist? Is it endangered? Is that a good or bad thing? Who is protecting it and what is at stake? Does religion hinder or help in the process of developing and protecting the self? This aspect of the book is exciting (and realistic given the state of the current conversation), but also can become confusing—one almost wonders at times if the authors are debating the same issue. Fortunately, very helpful introductions to all three sections diminish this problem. Theologically, the book is particularly challenging because it explores the role that religious experience often plays in both supporting selves that are being endangered and in participating in the endangerment.

The book makes especially interesting reading in light of the very recent debate about selfhood and psychoactive medications such as antidepressants and antihyperactivity drugs. Do these pharmaceutical agents actually *change* what might be considered our essential selves? Such questions will likely be appearing more and more in the near future. *The Endangered Self* is a good

place for readers to augment and further refine their thinking about these issues both theologically and scientifically.

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Levenson, Jon D. *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xv + 192. \$14.99.

John D. Levenson, a professor at Harvard University, is an observant orthodox Jew, a distinguished scholar of the Hebrew Bible, and the closest approximation there is to a Jewish biblical theologian. This book consists of six slightly revised essays, all of which were previously published elsewhere: (1) "The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism"; (2) "Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology"; (3) "The Eighth Principle of Judaism and the Literary Simultaneity of Scripture"; (4) "Theological Consensus or Historicist Evasion? Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies"; (5) "Historical Criticism and the Fate of the Enlightenment Project"; and (6) "Exodus and Liberation." What ties the essays together is a thorough and unrelenting critique of the historical-critical method. Levenson's critique does not arise out of a fundamentalist obscurantism, nor does he buy into the tendency, so fashionable among contemporary literary critics, of dismissing the relevance of historical questions. Levenson acknowledges the importance of historical questions for interpretation, and his own exegetical work demonstrates a superb historical sensitivity. What he does attack is the tendency in historical-critical work to be satisfied with a historicist reconstruction of what the text might have once meant, never to raise the question what the text means for a contemporary audience. He writes as a religious person for whom the text continues to have religious significance, and he is very critical of biblical scholars in the academy who, in his opinion, seem to dismiss that abiding religious significance as an inappropriate object of their teaching and research. In the process of this criticism, he also attacks Christian scholars for their ignorance of postbiblical Jewish traditions and for their misrepresentation and "antisemitic" disparagement of the Jewish religion.

Levenson's critique cannot be easily dismissed. All of the essays are well argued and insightful. The historical-critical method does have its limitations, and historical critics have not always been self-conscious about their own presuppositions. Moreover, Christian scholars are not always as well informed about postbiblical Judaism as they should be, and Christian misrepresentations of Judaism abound.

On the other hand, one can hardly accept Levenson's argument without

significant reservations. Many historical critics are deeply religious and do address the question of what the Bible means for their contemporary communities of faith. Moreover, as James Barr has eloquently argued, one function of a historical-critical reading of the Bible is to allow the Bible to critique contemporary forms of religious faith, which often, despite many claims to the contrary, stand in marked contradiction to biblical beliefs or practices. Levenson is very critical of Paul Hanson's attempt to use the tension created by the internal contradiction between different biblical passages to develop criteria for discerning the abiding authority of the biblical witness. Levenson prefers to harmonize such contradictions. He argues that this harmonistic reading of traditional Judaism preserves the continuing validity of every biblical commandment as the word of God even if history has made the present fulfillment of a particular commandment impossible or moot. The argument strikes this reader as bogus. Commandments that have not been observed for two thousand years or have been spiritualized away hardly have an abiding significance as commandments. Why not simply admit the limited historical significance of certain commandments?

Moreover, to address the meaning of the biblical text primarily in terms of commandments is to approach the text more from a Jewish than a Christian point of view. Despite the unfortunate ignorance and resultant misrepresentation of Judaism too characteristic of Christian polemic, there are fundamental theological differences between Christian and Jewish appropriations of the biblical text. Some of what is dismissed by Levenson and other Jewish scholars as antisemitic diatribe is a profoundly theological critique of the Jewish interpretation of the Bible going back to Jesus himself. According to the Gospel stories that highlight Jesus' conflict with the Jewish religious leaders of his day, keeping commandments can become a substitute for loving God and neighbor, and hence for genuine obedience. There is no reason to doubt the essential historicity of these conflict stories, and their trenchant criticisms indicate that the religious problem in both Christian and Jewish communities is not limited to the past.

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Ceresko, Anthony R. *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992. Pp. xvi + 336. \$18.95.

When was the ideal "Golden Age" of the Old Testament? The eighth-century prophets? The glory days of King David and Solomon? The postexilic period with its concern for law, holiness, and identity? The periods of wilderness and exile as key formative moments in Israel's history?

For Anthony Ceresko, the glory days of Old Testament history go back to the time of early Israel with the exodus out of Egypt and a historically reconstructed peasant revolt that followed in Canaan (13th-11th centuries B.C.E.). Following Norman Gottwald's reconstruction in his *Tribes of Yahweh*, Ceresko argues that a small group of liberated slaves from Egypt served as catalysts for a social revolution of poor peasant farmers and other disaffected groups within the native Canaanite population. They gradually overthrew the oppressive city-states of Canaan and replaced the old elite system of domination and hierarchy with egalitarian social and economic structures in a process of "re-tribalization." The rest of Old Testament literature and history can be evaluated by the extent to which Israel moved toward or away from this ideal Golden Age.

Ceresko's *Introduction to the Old Testament* has as its stated goal to make available the results of Gottwald's work in the sociology of ancient Israel to a larger audience. Ceresko's work is intended as a textbook for a one-semester survey course on the Old Testament for an upper-level college or first-year seminary course. Although Gottwald himself has written an introduction to the Old Testament, Ceresko gives the reader access to Gottwald's work in a leaner, more accessible, and more "user-friendly" format. Questions at the end of each chapter provide helpful starting points for ongoing discussion.

The book may be evaluated by the two parts of its title. First of all, as an *Introduction to the Old Testament* the book is a well-written and solid overview. It provides a judicious survey of the Old Testament and its content, methods of study, and issues of interpretation. Ceresko's pedagogical skill as a professor teaching introductory courses in Old Testament at St. Michael's College in Toronto and at St. Peter's Pontifical Institute in Bangalore, India is evident. One omission is the lack of sustained treatment of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11, a section of great importance in the Bible's history of interpretation. Even given Ceresko's primary interest in the sociology and politics of ancient Israel, these chapters warrant more attention.

Second, the book may be evaluated by its subtitle, *A Liberation Perspective*. A textbook combining a solid survey of the Old Testament along with a particular angle of vision shaped by concerns for sociology and liberation theology fills a void in the literature. Ceresko wrestles with issues of class and gender, which are increasingly important elements in contemporary discussions of biblical interpretation. Two key elements of these discussions that weave in and out of Ceresko's *Introduction* are: (1) a hermeneutic of suspicion toward the oppressive ideology that may be hidden within the biblical text and within later interpretations of that text; and (2) the hermeneutical privilege of the poor.

Ceresko acknowledges the critiques of Gottwald's historical reconstruction of early premonarchic Israel but does little to answer them. The recon-

struction of this period is crucial for Ceresko, for it is in this time that "much of what was considered unique and original in Israel's religion" emerged (p. 8). But the question remains: Are we really able to reconstruct an ideal Golden Age in historical Israel that had the character of an egalitarian, gender-equal, and economically unstratified society? Or did Israel, like many societies then and now, wrestle throughout its long history "in the wilderness" between a remembered and oppressive Egypt of fleshpots for some but not all, and a promised but unrealized land of milk and honey for everyone? The biblical texts in their present form suggest more the latter than the former, and any attempt to get behind the texts to reconstruct the ideal society of premonarchic Israel is difficult, at best.

In any case, I recommend this book to those who seek a very readable survey of the Old Testament coupled with sustained attention to matters of social, economic, and political conflict as they are interwoven in Israel's story as the people of God.

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Parker, T. H. L. *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1986. Pp. 239. \$16.99.

Parker, T. H. L. *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*. 2d ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. 257. \$16.99.

All who are interested in the theology of the Reformation and the history of biblical interpretation will welcome the new edition of T. H. L. Parker's *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* and its companion volume, *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries*. Both because Calvin saw the commentaries as a vital partner to his *Institutes* and because he wrote them with pastors constantly in mind, any books that will make them more useful and understandable to leaders of the church are to be applauded. Parker's books do this very well. With Parker's able guidance we see Calvin as a biblical scholar of the Reformation, convinced that through the ancient message we will hear God's message today.

The two books give a fairly complete picture of the reformer at work on his commentaries, though despite parallel titles they are very different kinds of studies. Each is of potential benefit to any interested reader, but the New Testament volume has more technical content aimed at the specialist, while the Old Testament volume is explicitly aimed at a more general audience.

Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries begins with a history of Calvin's three forms of exposition (sermons, lectures, and formally written commentaries) and then outlines the general pattern of exposition common to these genres.

The second chapter is on the relationship between the two Testaments. For Calvin the substance of God's dealings with humanity is the same in both Testaments; only the form and the degree of clarity differ. The Old Testament is a shadow or a sketch, while the New presents the body itself or the completed painting; the Old is a school teacher, imparting things true and useful, but nevertheless preliminary. Calvin does not force Old Testament texts to have reference to the New, but through typology he can discern foreshadowings of the coming of Christ, and through *anagoge* or analogy he can apply Old Testament texts to the Christian church.

Chapters three through five are devoted to Calvin's handling of the Old-Testament genres of history, law, and prophecy. In the historical narratives Calvin saw the church's unfolding covenant relationship with God, and God's providential guidance of the church. Calvin has rearranged the whole of the law according to the pattern of the decalogue. Parker gives us a complete picture of Calvin's treatment of the first and eighth commandments, and an outline of the whole harmonization. He describes Calvin's view of the prophets as interpreters of the law, inspired by God. He gives an excellent discussion of Calvin's terms for inspiration, some of which imply divine control, though this is softened by others indicating that God was hinting or suggesting rather than dictating.

Here and elsewhere Parker insightfully points out issues wherein apparent opposites stand together. Calvin's doctrine of providence stands beside his emphasis on choices made by the human characters. He has a high view of inspiration, and yet he rearranges the biblical narrative to his own chronology and acknowledges inconsistencies.

The volume has two indices, and a bibliography of first editions of Calvin's commentaries. Unfortunately, a full page of this bibliography was omitted, at least in my review copy, though it was included in the original T&T Clark edition.

Calvin's New Testament Commentaries alternates between sections of general and technical interest. The first chapter discusses the chronology of the New Testament commentaries and their importance in Calvin's work. A very good feature of the second edition is a new appendix to this chapter on the theological purpose behind the order of the commentaries. Parker wisely argues that Romans was treated first because of its importance to Calvin as a guide to interpreting all of scripture. Likewise among the Gospels, John was commented on first because Calvin saw it as the fullest exposition of the office and work of Christ.

The second chapter is new, and is the largest part of the revision. Here, through detailed textual analysis of the commentaries on Romans and Hebrews, Parker shows how the commentaries changed as Calvin revised them for the collected editions of 1551 and 1556. Calvin emerges as a diligent

biblical scholar, ever amending his text, clarifying his points, and improving his Latin style, increasing the volume of the Romans commentary by about half from 1540 to 1556. Parker shows the reformer's mind to be very consistent, as he maintained the same basic interpretation of passages through every revision.

By comparing Calvin's methods to those of Melancthon, Bullinger, and Bucer, chapters three and four provide an excellent introduction to sixteenth-century biblical interpretation. Calvin's guiding rule was clarity and brevity in an effort to expose the mind of the biblical author. His "genuine" or "literal" sense of the text is compared with other medieval and Renaissance interpreters who had addressed the differences between a literal and a spiritual sense.

Chapter five compares Calvin to Catholic and Protestant commentators on the issue of the canon. In this edition Parker implies that by not commenting on Revelation and 1 and 2 John, Calvin seems to have excluded them from his "practical canon." Chapter six seeks to identify the Greek texts used by Calvin and describes his work as a textual critic. Greater detail is provided in the new edition regarding specific New Testament manuscripts. Chapter seven explores the influences on Calvin's Latin translation in the commentaries. Special emphasis is given to Erasmus, though the Vulgate, Budé, Bucer, and Valla are also discussed. Chapter eight, "Prolegomena to Exegesis," is moved from its previous location before the chapter on the Greek text. With the text established and translated, Calvin keeps to his task of explaining the words and phrases in light of their larger context, and for a clearer understanding of the whole text. His sources in the fields of philology, geography, and antiquities are briefly discussed as well.

Other changes in the second edition include small additions and deletions to clarify or to harmonize the two volumes, and the translation of material that was in Latin in the first edition. Six bibliographies and four indices conclude the volume.

These are excellent books. One can only wish that all subjects were treated for both Testaments. Perhaps Parker will enrich us with such studies in the future as he has enriched us with these.

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Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. Pp. xxxiv + 793. \$40.00.

It is always a major event when a full-scale commentary on Romans is published by a distinguished scholar, but particularly so in this case. It is the

first such commentary by an English-speaking Roman Catholic since 1934. This long-awaited volume in *The Anchor Bible* is the work of Joseph Fitzmyer and is done with the meticulous care one comes to expect in Fitzmyer's writings. The format follows the familiar style of the series—fresh translation, introductory material, comments on pericopes, notes on particular sentences or phrases, and extensive bibliography.

Regarding questions of introduction, Fitzmyer tends to provide a mainline answer. For example, *Romans* is written to serve a confluence of ad hoc purposes—to introduce the writer to the Roman community, to solicit support for the planned mission to Spain, to ask for prayers for the impending Jerusalem visit, to address concrete problems in the community, and perhaps most of all to promote understanding and discussion of the gospel among the Jewish and Gentile Christians of Rome. Changing his mind from earlier writing on *Romans*, Fitzmyer affirms the integrity and Roman destination of 1:1–16:23 and abandons the Ephesian hypothesis.

In commenting on the text itself, Fitzmyer also takes rather standard positions, providing few interpretive surprises. His pattern is to survey the various options posed on a problem and then to offer a brief statement defending his own choice. The expression *dikaïosynē theou*, awkwardly translated as “uprightness of God” (following E. J. Goodspeed), is consistently understood as a quality of God (subjective genitive) rather than the uprightness communicated by God to human beings (objective genitive). The verb “justify” (*dikaïoun*) and the infrequent noun “justification” (*dikaïōsis*) express a judicial relationship between human beings and God, either forensic or ethical. Fitzmyer steers a middle course between justification as merely a subsidiary crater on the periphery of the letter (Schweitzer) and justification as the heart of the Christian message (Käsemann). The phrase *pistis Iēsou Christou* is always taken as the faith of human beings in Jesus rather than as Jesus' own faith(fulness).

Frequently Fitzmyer provides helpful material drawn from Catholic tradition to illumine theological issues arising from the text (e.g., original sin in connection with Rom. 5:12), though on occasion the issue chosen seems less than momentous (e.g., polygenism or monogenism also in connection with 5:12). Since the introductory section on Paul's theology is organized thematically (theology, Christology, etc.), one wishes for an extended theological overview that would provide an itinerary for the reading of the letter.

How does one evaluate a commentary like this? No doubt the answer depends on the user. On the one hand, the material in the commentary is readily accessible. The reader can find succinct and timely comments on a passage without having to search hither and yon or without wading through unnecessarily lengthy treatises. This supports its usability by seminary students and pastors.

On the other hand, the work's primary asset in a sense turns out to be its biggest liability. Compared to Fitzmyer's two volumes on the Gospel of Luke in this same series, the discussion of issues seems a bit thin, especially in light of the thoroughness of the bibliographies (over 200 pages of bibliographies in a 756-page text!). For example, the critical-exegetical questions of Rom. 7:7-25 are all discussed in the space of about thirteen pages and certain ones inadequately (such as the use of "I"). (For some reason, Fitzmyer has missed the magisterial study of this passage by Paul W. Meyer ["The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7," in *The Conversation Continues*, ed. Robert T. Fortna and Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), pp. 62-84].)

Caveats notwithstanding, it is important to have this gap of nearly sixty years filled by a commentary as fine as Fitzmyer's which will take its place alongside those of Käsemann, Cranfield, and Dunn as not-to-be-overlooked interpretations of Paul's preeminent letter.

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Barr, James. *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology: The Gifford Lectures for 1991*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. Pp. xii + 244. \$48.00.

Lord Gifford's endowment to establish the series of lectures bearing his name stipulates that they must be devoted to natural theology. James Barr's latest book, the 1991 Gifford lectures, follows that stipulation. But with its corollary, that no appeal be made to "special revelation," Barr takes some liberty. As he acknowledges, Barr is no fan of natural theology; his own starting point is against it, he does not find its ("box of tricks") arguments congenial, and he shares many of the objections theologians have raised against it. It is just that those objections, and those theologians, have variously ignored or distorted the Bible. Barr is concerned that this raises disturbing questions about the place of the Bible in theology and about the authority of scripture, with potentially "enormous effects upon Christianity" (pp. 32, 103). While Barr does devote himself to natural theology, it is scripture that both authorizes and compels him to do so, even against his own instincts. Barr's argument for natural theology is *sola scriptura*.

Would Lord Gifford be pleased? Doubtless better pleased than he would have been with Karl Barth, one of Barr's predecessors in the Gifford Lectures. This is of more than anecdotal interest, since Barth is the secondary subject of Barr's book; the first entry under "Barth, K.," in the index, is *passim*. Barth is everywhere. Any thorough treatment of natural theology would have to deal with Karl Barth. But Barr's treatment is not thorough. It does not examine the history of natural theology (apart from the 1930s and

1940s), or current efforts in it, such as those by Thomist philosophers like Eleonore Stump, or current reassessments of it, such as those by Protestants like Jüngel and Pannenberg. Barr is by no means ignorant of contemporary theology—he draws on Chr. Link and Walter Kasper, for example—it is just that his focus is resolutely on the two conclusions for which he argues. He argues, first, that “scripture itself sanctions, permits, evidences, or in some other way depends upon natural theology or something like it” (p. 19). And he argues, second, that this would be more widely, perhaps universally, recognized were it not for the invidious influence of Barth and Barthianism, and for Barth’s “pettifogging” tactics. Barr reveals, in fact, that Barth himself engaged in acts of natural theology.

Substantial portions of Barr’s book, and the best ones, examine biblical texts, beginning with Paul’s Areopagus speech in Acts 17 (chap. 2). Barr finds Barth’s treatment of it to be “a travesty of exegesis,” indeed “a denial of exegesis,” and even—horrors!—“more like pulpit rhetoric than scholarly exegesis” (p. 38). He reaches similar conclusions (chap. 3) regarding Romans 1 (and, in chap. 8, regarding Genesis 1). To explore the background of Paul’s natural-theology arguments Barr turns appropriately to Jewish texts, especially the Wisdom of Solomon (chap. 4). And from there he presses into the Old Testament (chap. 5), examining in varying detail a whole range of literature. His discussion of this literature is instructive, as one would expect. In all of it Barr finds natural theology, or at least “operations akin to those of natural law or natural theology” (p. 100).

The force of this discovery is blunted in Barr’s “Return to the Modern Discussion” (chap. 6), which he began in his first chapter. He continues with the modern discussion—that is, with Barth—in chapters on religion and tradition (chap. 7), the image of God (chap. 8), and language (chap. 9). The problem is not that Barr fails to define what he takes to be natural theology’s *claim*: “that by nature, that is, just by being human beings, men and women have a certain degree of knowledge of God and awareness of him, or at least a capacity for such an awareness,” which is “anterior to the special revelation of God made through Jesus Christ, through the Church, through the Bible” (p. 1). And neither is it that Barr is unpersuasive in his argument that Paul, the authors of Wisdom and Psalm 104, and John Calvin—on a short list of authorities—would have affirmed a form of this claim. The problem lies in Barr’s method, which is to identify as or with natural theology anything that is not “pure revelatory theology” in which all “thoughts and ideas come from God himself” (p. 151). Everything else is or depends on natural theology, in case it draws on religious tradition, engages in interpretation, employs concepts widely shared, argues according to public logic, or conducts itself in a natural language. This excludes nothing. Not unexpectedly, Barr concludes that “the distinction between natural and revealed theology breaks down in

the biblical material," and that there may be no important difference between them (pp. 126, 194).

The terms of the distinction he sees breaking down are Barr's own, even though the concept of revelation they entail is one Barr rejects. He adopts the concept for argument, because he believes (quite mistakenly) that it is compatible with Barth's. In an astonishing misreading and non sequitur, at the nadir of his argument, Barr claims that Barth was wrong in referring to the Bible as one form of the threefold word of God, since "there is much in the Bible that is not there because it is . . . something uniquely revealed by him [God] which would otherwise have been unknown" (p. 196). In proof, Barr observes that the statement in 1 Kings 22:51, that Ahaziah reigned in Israel two years, was public, natural knowledge. By way of contrast, Barr offers his own view of the Bible: It is "properly" and "directly and univocally" (not metaphorically or analogically) Israel's and the early church's response to and interpretation of God's revelation (p. 197). While he insists that this response and interpretation depend on natural theology, his previous remarks make the insistence sound like a tautology.

Barr's tenth and concluding chapter, which treats of war and genocide in the Hebrew Bible, and of modern interpreters, stands apart. There Barr indicates the kind of critical work he envisions for natural theology. It shows Barr at his best, which is a good way to finish.

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Johnson, Elizabeth A. *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992. Pp. xii + 316. \$24.95.

In this comprehensive study, Roman Catholic theologian Elizabeth A. Johnson "connects feminist and classical wisdom" in exploring the doctrine of God. Johnson makes two major constructive moves: (1) she reimagines the trinitarian God of the classical tradition in terms of female symbols (part 3), and (2) she re-envisions, in light of understanding God as *she*, the relationship between God and the world (part 4).

Johnson founds her exploration on her commitment to the divine mystery, which she understands to be a central teaching of Christian scripture and tradition. Who God is cannot be exhausted by any particular metaphor or group of metaphors, Johnson argues. To hold that God can be conceptualized *only* as male or *only* as female is to cling to an idol rather than to worship the mysterious, hidden God. Further, if God is understood only as male the inevitable theological message is that men are created more fully in the image of God. Insisting that this God has "feminine traits" or "dimensions" is not

an adequate solution to the dilemma, Johnson argues, because such a conception still portrays male humanity as normative. If we are committed to affirming the full humanity of women, we must work toward the equivalent usage of male and female images of the divine.

In exploring female symbols for God, Johnson draws on three sources: women's experience, scripture, and the classical tradition. Retrieving a character sketch drawn in Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon, Johnson compels us to grapple with the persona of Sophia-Wisdom: Sophia prophesies in the streets of the city, beckoning its inhabitants to deepened understanding; she created all things and orchestrates the redemptive events of salvation history.

Johnson upholds the triune nature of God as Sophia-Wisdom. While she holds, following Aquinas, that the number is analogical in nature (lest we conceive of God as divided into three parts), the three-in-one formulation of Spirit-Sophia, Jesus-Sophia, and Mother-Sophia reminds us of both the divine relationality and the divine unity. Johnson chooses to reverse the classical Father-Son-Spirit ordering of the three hypostases in her discussion, arguing that it is appropriate, from a feminist standpoint, to begin her study where "the dialectic of God's presence and absence shapes life in all its struggle."

When God is thought of as "she," particular insights about the nature of God, often underemphasized in an androcentric conceptuality, can emerge more clearly. While male analogies have traditionally been used to accentuate God's distance from the world, for example, female analogies tend to remind us of God's immanence and interdependence with the world. The omnipotent God who has been known as "he" is also "she" who compassionately suffers with us. Johnson hopes that, eventually, it will no longer be the case that male analogies are associated with certain characteristics and female analogies with others. As equivalent images of male and female become more commonplace, Johnson implies, he who is our Father will be seen as nurturing and accessible; she who is our Mother will be known as powerful and protective.

Johnson argues near the end of the book for a panentheistic understanding of the relationship between God and the world. In developing this point, one of the images Johnson evokes is that of a pregnant woman who has chosen to give birth to a child. The child is in the woman as the world is in God; God as Sophia-Mother nurtures us and is affected by us even as a mother supports, rejoices in, and is made uncomfortable by her unborn baby. This is not to imply that God *equals* the world, Johnson insists, holding that such a conceptuality would be incompatible with classical understandings. As the pregnant woman is distinct from her unborn child, Johnson explains, so God

and the world are also distinct. God is not "exhausted by the universe" that she contains.

One of Johnson's many strengths is that she is not afraid to work constructively, utilizing elements drawn from what are often considered to be conflicting theological strands. The connections she makes between feminist theology and the classical tradition are particularly promising for Christian women attracted to feminism but unwilling to reject elements of the tradition integral to their faith experience. At times, however, Johnson too easily integrates feminist thinking with classical Christian teachings. She does not engage in sufficient detail, for example, those feminist theologians who reject realist conceptions of a God who exists outside of, as well as within, the natural order. While some feminist theologians hold that analogies for the divine are not only all we have but also all there is, for Johnson (as for the classical tradition) there is a God toward whom our limited analogies point.

Johnson does not believe that her portrait is a final one. She encourages us to "keep faith with the question" of who God is, "creating, testing, reflecting, discarding, keeping." Anyone who is committed to the theological task of formulating language about the mysterious God will certainly be challenged by her bold methodology and fresh insights.

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Morse, Christopher. *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994. Pp. xiv + 417. \$22.00.

Our close friends and neighbors come in the back door. Only strangers ring the front doorbell. This was the unspoken rule in my childhood home. Like a good friend, Christopher Morse comes into the dogmatic house through the back door, through the portal of disbelief.

Yet, it is still the familiar home of affirmed Christian beliefs that we find in all systematic theologies: God, Christ, Spirit, humanity, church, and eschaton. What is new here is Morse's distinctive approach of sharply contrasting what we should affirm as true about God with false beliefs. We should disbelieve misleading political or ideological teachings. We should disbelieve disembodied or escapist soteriologies and eschatologies. This method of drawing contrasts he calls "testing the spirits," based on 1 John 4:1. "To believe in God is at once to disbelieve in what is not of God." This leads to a theological method that combines the virtues of community identification through confession in the style of Schleiermacher plus critical questioning and rejecting alternatives in the style of Thomas Aquinas.

For example, Morse defines *creation* as "all that comes from God but is

other than God." Then he adds: "Such usage rules out as creatures the Word and the Spirit, on the one hand, and evil, on the other." In other words, Word and Spirit are not separate from God; and evil is not a creature of God. Everything else is called creation. We used to think of this as a method of clarifying what we say, and this book is good at clarifying things.

Justification provides another example. He writes, "The gospel message attested by the church announces that the right to be human comes from God and not from any other source." Then he draws the contrast: "Christian faith thus disavows the belief that justification for our life is something to be earned." Drawing further implications he adds: "Less recognized, perhaps, have been the following claims that are disbelieved by this faith, that the right to be human is derived from the state, from an acquisition of property or class advantage, from ethnic or genetic privilege, or from adherence to a particular religion or orthodoxy, including Christianity."

This is a clearly written, readable book that articulates well the authentic commitments of the Christian faith. Morse, the newly inaugurated Dietrich Bonhoeffer Professor of Theology and Ethics at Union Seminary, New York, is to be congratulated for producing a solid piece of pedagogical work.

Yet, I would like to add a modest demur. Although the publication date is 1994, this book could have been written in 1964. Its agenda seems to be restricted to the modern critical agenda that exhausted itself with the death-of-God theologies. Morse fails to wrestle with emerging postmodern or postcritical challenges. Two such challenges come to mind. First, the critical reappraisal of belief is a modern and laudable task of the human mind, to be sure; but it leaves the human spirit and the tasks of daily living without meaning and without guidance. What is needed in our time is a postcritical or holistic reappropriation of the Christian symbols that meaningfully reorients our whole believing selves in the world. The book does raise the issue of wholeness, as well it should; yet very little guidance is offered for daily living beyond entertaining proper beliefs in one's mind.

Second, rather than address the spiritless secular world now gone by, theologians need to recognize that the spirits are back. Modern culture has seen the limits of secularism and gone beyond. Widespread belief in spirits, and perhaps the actual spirits themselves, have returned. The explosion of New Age spirituality outside the church and the aggressive retrieval of spiritual practices at the church's margins testify to this. So, to reduce the spirits of 1 John 4:1 to nonspirits—that is, to political prophecies and teachings that intellectual theologians can get a hold of—is to miss an opportunity to address the wider culture to which we indelibly belong.

Ted Peters
Pacific Lutheran Seminary

McFague, Sallie. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. xiv + 274. \$13.00.

This important volume stands in the tradition of religious ecofeminism and continues the legacy of other works in this field, including Judith Plaskow's *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective* and Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Gaia and God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing*. *The Body of God* is a bellwether of the promise and tensions within progressive Christian thought. Throughout my reading of the book I posed to myself the question, can McFague negotiate successfully the contested ground that separates the classical theological heritage from the contemporary concerns of postmodern culture, or does her work finally sacrifice too much of traditional Christian doctrine in the interest of correlating religious belief with the cultural *Zeitgeist*?

McFague's central thesis is that theology for our time must first and foremost be able to account for the environmental crisis through a restructured understanding of God's relation to the world. As she did in her earlier volume, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*, she argues that traditional theology has been dominated by a dualistic and monarchical model of God in which God was seen as both in control of, and unrelated to, the world in a manner similar to a medieval king's relationship to his feudal possessions. Since in the monarchical model God is not understood as intrinsically related to the world, it follows that the earth can be used—and sometimes abused—to serve human ends. McFague offers an organic or bodily understanding of God as a counterpoint to the regnant monarchical model. God is the "inspired body" or "embodied spirit" of the universe; as the radically immanent reality within which we "live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28), God is the "body of the universe."

The model of the world as God's body subjects God to fundamental loss, perhaps even destruction, in a manner that an extrinsic and hierarchical theology does not, because while "God is not reduced to the world, the metaphor of the world as God's body puts God 'at risk.' If we follow out the implications of the metaphor, we see that God becomes dependent through being bodily, in a way that a totally invisible, distant God would never be" (p. 72). On an initial reading of McFague's work, therefore, God appears to be fundamentally immanent to the world, but on a further reading, we find that God is not dependent on the world in the same way we are dependent on our bodies, in spite of what might appear to be the logical force of McFague's panentheistic model of God. "Everything that is is *in* God and God is *in* all things and yet God is not identical with the universe, for the universe is dependent on God in a way that God is not dependent on the universe" (p. 149). From my perspective, it is at this point that the reader is left with a

troubling equivocation on McFague's part: if the world *is* God's body, and if "being embodied" as opposed to simply "having a body" entails that an entity is fundamentally dependent on its body for its well-being, then in what sense is God *both* bodily and yet *not* dependent on God's body, the universe, for the divine life's health and maintenance? McFague wants to have it both ways. She wants to maintain both God's identity with and autonomy from the universe, God's body, without specifying the exact manner in which God both *is* and *is not* dependent on the earth.

In spite of this problem, my sense is that McFague's biocentric model of God, while it will be disturbing to some in the American Protestant mainstream, has the potential to strike a deep chord in persons, inside and outside the churches, who yearn for divine immanence, bodily wholeness, and social responsibility. But this model is not for everyone. For some it will purchase a coherent environmental theology at too steep a price, namely, the conventional understanding of God's sovereign nature as self-subsistent and independent from the fate of the earth. Be this as it may, *The Body of God* promises new directions for Christian environmental thought in a manner that is both theologically nuanced and culturally appropriate.

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Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Toward a Theology of Nature: Essays on Science and Faith*. Edited by Ted Peters. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. x + 166. \$19.99.

The last decade has seen an explosion of publications in the ever-growing field of religion and science. Some of the work in this new discipline occurs on the edges of traditional religious thinking. But one author who has been determined to take it into the core of traditional Christian thought is German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg. In two earlier book-length publications (*Theology and the Philosophy of Science* and *Anthropology in Theological Perspective*), Pannenberg addressed the methodological issues of relating theology to science and the relationship between theology and the anthropological sciences. However, prior to the publication of this volume his reflections on the relationship between theology and the natural sciences, particularly physics and biology, could be found only in a number of scattered essays. These essays, written between 1970 and 1988, three of which have never before been published in English, have now been brought together in one volume, making them more accessible to the general reader.

Throughout these seven essays Pannenberg's primary concern is with our understanding of God's relationship to the world of nature. In the first three

essays Pannenberg outlines how the advent of classical physics in the seventeenth century had the effect of making any notion of God's interaction with nature appear superfluous. He singles out in particular the concept of inertia, which stated that material bodies have an inherent power to preserve their status unless it is changed by interaction with other material bodies, and which had as a corollary the principle that all changes in nature were the result of such interactions alone. Thus, the concept of God appeared no longer necessary to explain either the persistence of natural entities or the course of natural events. This resulted in a divorce between theology and the attempt to give an explanation of nature, which was relegated to science alone. This situation was reinforced with the advent of Darwin's theory of biological evolution.

For Pannenberg, this situation is intolerable for a responsible Christian theology. For if the God in whom Christians believe is truly the creator of the universe, then it ought not be possible fully or appropriately to understand the processes of nature without reference to God. Thus, if Christian theology is to defend its belief in God as creator, it must show that a complete explanation of nature cannot be given by science alone, but must also include reference to a divine reality. For Pannenberg this is not done by looking for so-called gaps in the scientific account of nature, nor by rejecting the scientific account of nature in favor of some allegedly revealed account. Rather, it means looking for possible "openings to God" in the contemporary scientific account of nature.

Two possible openings to God that Pannenberg describes in these essays are the contingency of natural processes and the concept of a field of force. While the biblical understanding of reality views the events of nature as manifestations of the free activity of God, and thus understands nature as characterized by contingency, the scientific account of nature has traditionally understood nature as being characterized by conformity to natural and immutable laws. But this has been done, says Pannenberg, only by abstracting from the contingent features of nature. Pannenberg further suggests that the observable regularities of nature are themselves a contingent occurrence within the historical process of nature. Theologically, the existence of such regularities can be interpreted as resulting from God's faithfulness in upholding and sustaining what God has created. Thus, rather than contradicting the biblical understanding of the contingent character of natural events and their relationship to the free activity of God, the observance of regularities in nature actually supports this understanding.

The second opening to God that Pannenberg describes is the concept of field. In classical physics, force was thought to be a property of bodies. However, the new field theory understands force as a property of fields, and bodies as a manifestation of the fields of force that transcend them. This, too,

says Pannenberg, provides an opening to talk about the dependence of nature on a transcendent reality. Specifically, Pannenberg describes how the concept of field can lead to a revised understanding of God as Spirit.

Pannenberg's reflections on these issues are complex and require careful reading to comprehend. But one need be neither a professional theologian nor a scientist to grasp their basic import and promise for a revised understanding of God and the world that is faithful both to the biblical understanding of God and to the modern scientific account of nature.

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Ellacuría, Ignacio, and Jon Sobrino, eds. *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books; North Blackburn, Australia: CollinsDove, 1993. Pp. xv + 752. \$44.95.

The theology of liberation is gradually bringing about significant changes in our reflection on the Christian faith, here as well as in Latin America. Even in more conservative circles, pastors and lay persons are more sensitive to what the scriptures have to say about God's concern for the poor and oppressed. Many now realize that the salvific work of Christ has to do with all dimensions of human existence, the material as well as the spiritual, the social as well as the personal. And they know that faith must be expressed in action, and that theology must be shaped by the ongoing dialogue between the practice of faith and our biblical and theological heritage.

But those who want to learn more about this theology or what it has to say about specific issues may not know where to turn to do so, given the large number of books and articles written about it. For those facing this problem, this book can be an enormous help. Several years ago, Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, the two major Jesuit theologians at the Central American University José Simeón Cañas, in San Salvador, decided to edit a systematic presentation of the method, history, and central concepts of liberation theology. They selected about thirty topics of central importance and invited theologians to present, in short and clear essays, what the theology of liberation has to say about each.

This resulted in the publication of two large volumes under the title *Mysterium Liberationis* in 1990. A few months before this work was completed, Ellacuría was assassinated, along with five other Jesuits, their cook, and her daughter, in the residence of the Archbishop Romero Center. This fact helps to keep before the reader not only the social context in which liberation theology has developed but also the quality of faith and life out of which it has come.

We now have, in one volume in English, an abridged edition of the original work. In it, most of the major figures best known in this country

contribute essays on specific topics. Gustavo Gutiérrez develops the theological meaning of the "Option for the Poor," Enrique Dussel discusses the theology of liberation and Marxism, and Pablo Richard writes about the experience of God and idolatry in Latin America. Others present the core of their thought developed in books they have written: Leonardo Boff on the Trinity, José Comblin on the Holy Spirit, Marcello de C. Azevedo on the base communities, and Sobrino on Christology and on spirituality. The volume also contains four important essays by Ellacuría, only one of which had been published previously in English. And other Latin Americans less known in the English-speaking world bring important contributions on the particular themes on which they have written.

Given the nature of this work and the generally high quality of the essays, I find myself turning to it frequently in my own study and recommending it to others who ask about where they might turn for help in understanding any specific aspect of liberation theology.

At the same time, this comprehensive picture suffers from two rather serious limitations. It is not as representative as it claims to be. It attempts to make "a systematized presentation of the core and nucleus of the theology of liberation" without even mentioning that this theology, from the beginning, has been a product of Protestant as well as Catholic efforts. No mention is made of the early Protestant initiatives in the Church and Society Movement in Latin America, the important contribution of Rubem Alves to the development of a new theological paradigm, or the growing ecumenical collaboration now taking place in biblical studies. Twelve of the twenty-seven authors are Jesuits and more than half of the chapters were written by them. And only two chapters were written by women, one on "Mary," the other on "Women and the Theology of Liberation."

Second, while doing a magnificent job of laying before us what liberation theology has been, it is not of much help in pointing directions for future developments. Liberation theology was born out of the anguish of those struggling to discover "how to tell the poor of this world that God loves them" (Gutiérrez). To respond to that cry, they were led to a *rereading* of the Bible and to the articulation of a new theological paradigm. Therein lies the power of their work. But in the new social situation in which we are living, the poor are turning in vast numbers to Pentecostal preaching and experience more than to liberation theology. At the same time, many women, Afro-Latin Americans, and indigenous people are raising fundamental questions about the type of rationality as well as the cultural limitations of these theological efforts. For those struggling on these frontiers, the essays in this volume may prove useful, but only as they serve as a resource for a new stage of theological re-creation that will go beyond them.

Richard Shaull
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Barth, Karl. *The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life: The Theological Basis of Ethics*. Translated by R. Birch Hoyle. With a Foreword by Robin W. Lovin. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xxi + 70. \$9.99.

The reprinting of R. Birch Hoyle's 1938 translation of Karl Barth's lecture "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Life" is a welcome event. The lecture was originally given during the course of a "theological week"—a conference for pastors and students—in Elberfeld, Germany, on October 9, 1929, and published with a companion piece by Barth's philosopher-brother Heinrich the following year. The lecture was composed towards the end of a sabbatical semester, during an irenic phase in Barth's theological existence. Though the fundamental material and methodological decisions set forth in this lecture were the same as those that would later govern the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth felt a good deal freer at this time to take up categories and concepts favored by his critics and to give them a "spin" that made them commensurate with his own theology. Among these borrowed categories were the so-called "orders of creation" (which had been expansively employed by Friedrich Gogarten) and, surprisingly perhaps, the "*analogia entis*" (which had been elaborated by the Polish Jesuit Erich Przywara). In the not-too-distant future, Barth would polemicize against the use of such terms. The mounting criticisms of his own project in dogmatic theology from within the circle of dialectical theologians, the dramatic shift in political fortunes in Germany in the autumn of 1930, and the unwelcome spectacle of erstwhile colleagues like Gogarten embracing nationalist ideologies would induce Barth to distance himself from his former comrades and eventually to break off all relations with them. One of the consequences of this development was that Barth sought to clarify his position through the elimination of ambiguous concepts. He could have continued to speak of the orders of creation and even the *analogia entis* in his own way, but to do so in the new situation would only have created confusion. For now, however, he was under no such constraints.

The recognition that Barth had not turned his back on the position articulated in this 1929 essay is of great importance for the Barth scholar today. It allows us to see, for example, that the *analogia fidei* has ontological implications; indeed, that a "true *analogia entis*" is the consequence of a rightly ordered understanding of the *analogia fidei*. In the 1929 essay, Barth rejected Przywara's elaboration of the *analogia entis* in terms of a given (created) continuity between the being of God and the being of the creature, by virtue of which the creature could understand herself as "open upward," that is, as containing within herself an abiding revelation that made the knowledge of God a human possibility. Against Przywara's view, Barth held that human beings can know a great deal about themselves, but they cannot know that they are *creatures* in the strict, theological sense of the term. "If the creature

is to be strictly understood as a reality willed and placed by God in distinction from God's own reality, that is to say, as the wonder of a reality which by the power of God's love, has a place and persistence alongside God's own reality, then the continuity between God and it (the true *analogia entis*, by virtue of which he, the uncreated Spirit, can be revealed to the created spirit)—this continuity cannot belong to the creature itself but only to the Creator *in his relation to the creature*" (p. 5). "In his relation" to the creature; that means the true *analogia entis* must be understood to be the consequence of a dynamic relation of God to the creature, a relation that is never simply a given (a *datum*) but is always, in every moment, to be given (a *dandum*). Thus, the true *analogia entis* is never a predicate of the creature but is rather a predicate of God's ongoing act of relating to the creature. It is a relationship of correspondence between the act in which God has his being (grace) and the act in which the creature has her being (obedience as the response to grace). Being, on this view, is a function of decision and act and not the other way around (as occurred in Catholic theology). The importance of these observations lies in the fact that they provide an account of the ontology that Barth presupposed but never clarified in the prolegomena volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*, and thereby make a more accurate understanding of those volumes possible.

Barth's essay is only indirectly about ethics (the subtitle was added by the editor of this new edition). It is a work in pneumatology. Indeed, it is a trinitarian discussion of pneumatology that considers the work of the Holy Spirit from the standpoint of creation, reconciliation, and redemption. Barth's central conviction is that the Holy Spirit, if indeed it is truly the *Holy* Spirit of which we wish to speak, is not human spirit. No synthesis of the two may be imagined; every attempt at a synthesis falls under the judgment that the spirit spoken of is the "Evil Spirit" (p. 23) against which the Holy Spirit strives in his efforts to reconcile and redeem fallen humanity. Even the sworn enemy of Pelagianism, Augustine himself, comes in for sharp criticism for advancing an understanding of grace as an infused love that grants to the creature a capacity for cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit. Faith, for Barth, is never, at any point, a capacity of the creature. It is a response of the creature to a present action of the Holy Spirit; it is never a completed action that would allow the creature to say "I have believed." Thus, Barth's actualistic account of faith is the end of all synergism. In Barth's view, we will never have a truly Protestant understanding of grace until every last vestige of the "sweet poison" (p. 22) of the Augustinian conception has been stripped away. This will undoubtedly strike some readers as stern stuff, but the drift of contemporary theology into the abyss of self-deification shows just how needed such a word is today.

It is hard to come away from a fresh reading of this essay without a certain

feeling of wistfulness. Barth's mastery of his subject matter, his acute analysis of Neo-Protestant ("liberal") and Catholic theology, the ease with which he assembles pertinent data from the writings of Augustine and Luther, and, above all, the very clear lines he draws in setting forth his pneumatology—all combine to awaken in the reader a profound respect for the spiritual depth and academic rigor that once characterized theology in this century. Theology, as Barth did it, was indeed a beautiful science. With the publication of reprints like this one, helping to create a new audience for serious theology, it may become so again.

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Wogaman, J. Philip. *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xi + 340. \$19.99.

It is a bold writer who ventures to compose a history of Christian ethics. Giants have played in this arena: first Ernst Troeltsch in 1911 with his *Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, then Kenneth Kirk in 1931 with his utterly different *The Vision of God*, and Anders Nygren in 1932 with *Agape and Eros*. For half a century they, with their sharp differences, set the terms of debate and study for us all. A host of work was produced on particular themes—anthropology, spirituality, politics, economics, sex, marriage, and family—in historical perspective, and on the ethics of particular periods and theologians. No one ventured a new synthetic view, though the closest was a still invaluable 1955 volume by Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christian Ethics*, which simply presents excerpts preceded by brief introductions for fifteen major historical thinkers and movements.

Then, in 1979 Lutheran theologian George Forell published the first of a promised (but not yet delivered) three-volume work, *History of Christian Ethics*, which reached as far as Augustine. In 1981 the British Baptist R. E. O. White produced *Christian Ethics*, a competent historical survey. And now, more than a decade later, we have Philip Wogaman's balanced and sweet-spirited (he is a Methodist) overview of the field.

All these works have their strengths and weaknesses. Wogaman's grows stronger as he moves through history toward the present. Especially helpful is his sensitivity to the way in which women were understood and have played a role in this history. His summary of the twentieth century is even-handed and fair. Many would dispute the bias of his emphases (long on the social gospel, somewhat short on ecumenical ethics, to reveal my own), but that is the privilege of a scholar who has the courage to tackle the task. His section on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is remarkably clear and concise. His treatment of Reformation, medieval, and Augustinian ethics is standard for a textbook though a bit short on Luther. In short, this volume is an up-to-

date, useful introductory survey of the historical field from a balanced ecumenical perspective.

The exception is his treatment of the Bible. This has been a problem for all historians of ethics. Troeltsch, Kirk, Nygren, Forell, and even Beach and Niebuhr imposed their perspectives on it. White handled the problem by devoting a whole first volume of his history to *Biblical Ethics*. Wogaman does not even try to treat the biblical material but subsumes it under six fields of tension, which he repeats at the end of the book as the problems of today: revelation vs. reason, materialism vs. the life of the spirit, universalism vs. group identity, grace vs. law, love vs. force, and status vs. equality. They are important tensions, but not the only ones, and, as expounded, often not the basic ones. One wonders for example about questions of authority, divine and human, of sin and redemption, of faithfulness and betrayal, of the meaning of the cross and the hope of God's coming reign in relation to other human hopes. But the basic point is that the history of Christian ethics needs to be based on a struggle with the biblical work itself, even at the risk of a biased hermeneutic. This is how all the great moral thinkers of Christian history did it. This is what makes their thought an open invitation to a common search for moral truth that commands us all but that we never compass or control. Wogaman's treatment expresses this implicitly at many points. He needs to let us read him working with the biblical message itself.

Charles C. West

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Brueggemann, Walter, Charles B. Cousar, Beverly R. Gaventa, and James D. Newsome. *Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV, Year B*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. viii + 616. \$32.00.

The expanding influence of *The Revised Common Lectionary* for preaching in mainline Protestant churches is nowhere more visible than in the already formidable but constantly growing shelf of lectionary "helps." Since 1983, when the Consultation on Common Texts presented the original *Common Lectionary*, publications devoted to assisting the preacher and liturgist have multiplied at a dizzying rate. Weekly homily services and monthly homiletical guides have appeared, and several quarterlies regularly dedicate a section to preaching the lectionary texts. The denominational publishing houses of mainline Protestantism have advanced lectionary preaching with several sets of books. Now Westminster/John Knox Press comes forth with *Texts for Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV, Year B*. Pastors may be forgiven for wondering if they really need to invest more money and shelf space on what will be a three-volume set. Those who do make the investment, however, will be generously rewarded and may even decide to cancel expensive subscriptions and heave those volumes that never helped quite as much as they promised.

Texts for Preaching is, as promised, a *commentary* on the lectionary for preachers. No snappy sermon starters surge from the pages, but the authors never forget they are writing for pastors. The partner for this commentary's dialogue is not the biblical/theological guild but the interpreter in a Christian congregation. Ongoing discussions and continuing controversies among biblical scholars are by no means brushed aside but alluded to briefly as the writers focus on the business at hand. As a commentary, the approach is largely literary-critical. Questions of translation, textual issues, historical-critical matters, and such appear as they may enhance the reading of the texts. The authors' readings are insightful, exciting, and enormously generative for the preacher's own imaginative reading and interpretation. *Texts for Preaching* succeeds astonishingly as a one-volume commentary for a lectionary year.

The writers are Walter Brueggemann, Charles B. Cousar, and James D. Newsome, all of Columbia Theological Seminary, and Beverly Roberts Gaventa, formerly at Columbia, now at Princeton Theological Seminary. They have divided the year at Easter Sunday. Brueggemann writes the Hebrew Bible lessons before Easter, the Psalms afterward; Newsome does the reverse. Gaventa interprets the Gospels and Cousar the epistles until they switch at Easter. Each set of lessons is preceded by an introduction. Lectionary preachers who long ago threw up their hands in despair of finding anything to say about all four lessons will be surprised at the coherence and helpfulness of these introductions.

Texts for Preaching is an exceptionally well-written conversation with the lectionary. Readers who think they have already heard everything that can productively be said about David will delight in Newsome's illumining commentary. Brueggemann, as might be expected, brings his galvanic prose to bear on the Psalms, sometimes threatening to dash into the pulpit himself. Preaching from the letters of Paul has often amounted to little more than harvesting themes from the epistles and preaching those. Cousar and Gaventa trace the twisting threads of argument in the epistles so skillfully that a preacher wishing to learn how to preach Paul might do well to begin here. Their work on Mark constitutes nothing less than the most helpful commentary in print for preaching that Gospel. An index of texts makes the volume useful to pastors whose enthusiasm for the lectionary is more restrained.

Though preachers will doubtless receive the greatest benefit from *Texts for Preaching*, the book appears to be accessible to a much wider audience. Congregations with church school classes studying the lectionary texts before worship should find this exactly the sort of study guide required to stimulate thoughtful discussion and encounter with the texts.

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Fort Worth, TX

Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1993. Pp. 174. \$11.95.

It is hard to find a preaching book that is as strong on inspiration as it is on truth, that gently encourages even as it stretches, and that leaves the reader feeling as though, after a needed respite of the soul, she can once again take on with joy the mantle of "preacher." Barbara Brown Taylor's *The Preaching Life* is such a book.

This work is no systematic theology of preaching (though it is full of excellent theology), no blueprint for how to develop good sermons (though it includes thirteen of Taylor's own well-crafted sermons), no primer in the use of metaphor and image in proclamation (though its pages burst with "aha!" moments born of earthy metaphors and compelling images). No, this is a different genre of homiletical literature—a genuinely poetic and autobiographical theology of the preaching heart in which a self-proclaimed "detective of divinity" (Taylor's image for the preacher) shows us that good preaching is born of an ability to discern and to discover "the presence that still moves just beneath the surface of every created thing" (p. 49) and, by so doing, to help congregations discover such holiness too.

This is the type of (rare) preaching book one would want to curl up with in front of a good fire, or sit and ponder in a rocking chair with a glass of iced tea on a sunny summer afternoon. It is also the type of (even rarer) book that feeds the preacher's spirit as much as the mind, that reminds us of the gentle joy that can be found in a task that all too many deem merely arduous, and that invites us to discover anew the workings of the extraordinary God manifest in the very ordinary matters of everyday existence. For, as Taylor knows, it is only when daily life is viewed as the work and playground of God through the crucible of a faithful imagination that the preacher is enabled to proclaim a gospel that is as down-to-earth as God's own incarnational Word to us.

Taylor's book is inspirational. She inspires the preacher to think more deeply, observe life more closely, and write more poetically. She inspires the preacher to re-collect the fragments of her or his own journey of faith and call, and to marvel anew that God has been manifest in vessels as ordinary as parents and pastors, tadpoles and communion cups. Above all, she gently urges the preacher to shake off the lethargy, the weariness, and the downright boredom that can so easily deaden this habitual task, and to rekindle within flames of delight and desire that cause preaching to become an act of worshipful praise.

Preaching, for Taylor, is a treasure hunt in which "I want to discover something fresh—even if I cannot quite identify it yet, even if it is still covered with twigs and mud," and then "haul it into the pulpit and show others what God has shown me, while I am still shaking with excitement and

delight" (p. 81). Preaching, for Taylor, is an act of loving devotion in which the preacher, like Cyrano de Bergerac, stands in the pulpit, "passing messages between two would-be lovers who want to get together but do not know how" (p. 78). Above all, preaching, for Taylor, is a mysterious and holy act. "It is alchemy, in which tin becomes gold and yard rocks become diamonds under the influence of the Holy Spirit" (p. 85).

Taylor's prose—in which the seams between earth and heaven are so finely woven as to be indistinguishable—is infused with something that causes even the most jaded among us to believe in alchemy. She models well that which she invites us to reclaim.

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale
Princeton Theological Seminary

Smith, Donald P. *How to Attract and Keep Active Church Members*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992. Pp. 184. \$13.95.

This primer on congregation membership is the third book by a seasoned observer of American mainline Protestantism. Donald P. Smith is a Presbyterian pastor who formerly served as the Director of the Vocational Agency, a division of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that recruited, trained, evaluated, and transferred pastors. His two earlier books, *Clergy in the Cross Fire: Coping with Role Conflicts in the Ministry* (1973) and *Congregations Alive* (1981), established a soft research technique that probed the structures, commitments, and habits of Presbyterian congregations of many sizes and locations. In *Congregations Alive* Smith established six characteristics common to congregations that he deemed vital, growing, and well managed.

How to Attract and Keep Active Church Members continues this technique of combing questionnaires, sifting on-site interviews with clergy and laity, and then collating his data with the growing body of literature about why persons join, remain, and leave American congregations. Particularly revealing are the reasons why persons quietly depart "by the backdoors" of Presbyterian congregations, which are the focus of this study. Contrary to a widespread myth, persons do *not* leave congregations because of conflicting social views, theological emphases, or diversity of political opinion (see pp. 99–104). Rather, Smith shows that persons drift away because of one or a combination of the following reasons: a "failure to bond" within a caring community (chap. 3); an encounter with a meaningless and impoverished faith experience (chap. 4); an intentional exclusion from congregational decision making (chap. 6); and a debilitating engagement with the "corporate pain" of congregational conflict (chap. 8). The reasons persons remain in congregations—that is, they experience the opposites of the above negatives—provide essential clues as to what attracts persons to join congregations in the first place.

Smith maintains that most “high loss” congregations, regardless of membership size, are oblivious to their exclusivity and shunning. His research concurs with that of other scholars, who find that one-third to one-half of all Protestant church members do not feel they really belong to their congregations. Furthermore, the more intentional and powerful the “cohesive forces” of a congregation—such as worship styles, ethnicity, cultic practices, magnetism of the minister, and simple nostalgia—the more likely it will exclude newcomers. Thus the prevailing argument of this book emerges: membership in a congregation is easier to obtain than acceptance. Those congregations that are thriving, Smith finds, give disproportionate time and caring to new members; congregations that are waning, Smith finds, give disproportionate attention to and programming for older members.

Smith’s final chapter addresses some of the current issues swirling around the nature of pastoral leadership in congregations. Surprisingly, both “high loss” congregations and “bonding” congregations rated their ministers’ preaching and worship-leadership skills as excellent or outstanding. Something more, though not less, is needed to bond members into a “faithful community.” Smith insists that pastors who (1) work with a strategy for mission achievement, (2) help members find meaning for living, (3) share traditional ministerial functions with laity, (4) generate enthusiasm for congregations’ ministries, (5) handle conflict constructively, and (6) attend to their own growth (personally and professionally) are more likely to lead bonding congregations than those pastors who rely only on preaching, teaching, or visitation. One wishes for a more extended treatment of this insight. If it is true, then the church’s attention to “pastor formation” needs serious reappraisal. Rumor has it that Smith’s upcoming book will tell us what he thinks effective pastoral leadership requires these days.

While there is little here that is really new or startling, Smith’s book is wise counsel for those of us preoccupied with the current malaise of mainline Protestant congregations in America. And it would be especially instructive and accessible reading for lay leaders in most congregations.

John W. Stewart
Princeton Theological Seminary

Arnold, William V. *Pastoral Responses to Sexual Issues*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. xiv + 144. \$12.99.

William V. Arnold, a professor of pastoral care and counseling at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, had hoped to make this book a joint project with his wife, Margaret Anne Fohl, a parish pastor, as they had coauthored two books previously, but her church work made this impossible. Still, in spite of its single authorship, the book nicely bridges the often

formidable gap between seminary and parish, in part because Arnold was on sabbatical leave while writing it and could test what he was writing vis-à-vis the realities of the church his wife is serving.

The book has two parts. The first is called "The Pastor's Responsibility for Self-Awareness," and consists of three chapters, one on getting in touch with one's own deep memories, beliefs, and values about sexuality, another on gender differences and how they affect our feelings and views about sexuality, and another on creating a safe and comfortable environment for parishioners to talk about sexual issues with their pastor. Part two is headed "Sexual Issues and Pastoral Care," and has five chapters on topics including sexual dysfunction in marriage, extramarital affairs, sexual discrimination and abuse, sexuality and adolescence, and homosexuality. The book concludes with some "final reflections."

A major theme of the first section is that pastors need to be self-aware if they are to be genuinely helpful to others. Given the particular concerns of this book, this means becoming aware of how we feel about our bodies; of what we learned about sexuality in our family of origin, especially through the ways that our parents or other guardians related to one another on an emotional and physical level; and of what we believe, deep down, about various sexual issues (essentially those discussed in part 2). As Arnold stresses, "The absence of a clear 'sense of self' in professional caregivers can result in great harm to others," especially in matters of sexuality (p. 18).

A second major theme in the book's first part, one that is carried over into the second, is that theology makes an important difference in how one responds to sexual issues and problems. In chapter two, Arnold introduces the conceptual model he employs throughout the book, one in which theology, psychology, and sometimes biology are made to "interplay" with one another. Here he introduces his critical theological point, that human finitude is to be distinguished from sin, and that "the refusal or inability to distinguish between finitude and sin, between helplessness and choice, results in much of the pain and suffering that people experience. This is particularly true in the already emotionally charged sphere of sexuality." Indeed, "We know, for instance, that people under intense stress or anxiety, in the absence of self-awareness, begin to lose the ability to make distinctions. A focused sense of self is lost. Choices and perceptions blur, and the ability to see alternatives fades. The power of sexuality, its depth of feeling, often makes it difficult to separate feeling from fact, rationality from emotionality. Discernment fades in the face of such overwhelming force" (p. 31). The pastor's most important role is to help parishioners clarify the boundaries between finitude (limitations and vulnerabilities over which they have no control) and sin (matters for which they bear personal responsibility).

A third major theme in part one is that pastoral care is about creating safe

harbors in which parishioners are set at ease and are free to explore their sexual issues. As Arnold emphasizes in chapter three, this means, above all, that the pastor, aided by self-awareness, understands his or her own vulnerabilities and distortions where sexual matters are involved. The "rhetoric of boundaries" is employed here (boundaries of space, time, language, touch, own feelings) to discuss and describe the limits that make for safe harboring.

The specific issues explored in part two are first identified via brief vignettes, then each is viewed from a theological and psychological (and sometimes a biological) perspective. This, in turn, leads to suggestions for pastoral practice or strategy. To illustrate, the chapter on "extramarital affairs" begins with several brief vignettes. An especially poignant one is that of a wife whose husband, a stroke victim, has been in a nursing home for the past nine years, and she has been seeing another man, who is unmarried, for the past year or so. She wonders, "What's really wrong with my just having a long-term affair with Bob? He understands and is willing. In fact, the relationship with Bob would probably help me care for Herbert with less resentment" (p. 80). The desire to look at the issue of extramarital affairs theologically takes Arnold to the scriptures, which basically reveal that extramarital affairs are disapproved but are not viewed with particular surprise, for we, after all, are finite and sinful creatures. What the scriptures also make evident is that "corrective action" needs to occur where harm has been done to another, and this may include confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation (though Arnold is careful to assert that reconciliation does not necessarily mean patching things up; it may mean agreeing that so much damage has been done to the relationship that it is not restorable).

The psychological perspective focuses around triangulation (and centers primarily on how the "affair partner" is often used to stabilize a rocky marriage) and transference (with the distinct likelihood that, in an affair, one is transferring unfulfilled feelings from an earlier relationship onto the "affair partner"). The discussion of pastoral practice centers on certain responses that are appropriate whatever the facts in the case may be and whomever it is that one may be talking with (e.g., Mary, Bob, Herbert, a friend of Mary's). These include recognizing that the trust issue is deeper and longer-lasting than sex per se; that one must reserve judgment in terms of blame or fault in order to maintain contact with the various parties involved; and that one should promote self-awareness in the ones who are seeking help so as to strengthen them for making difficult choices.

I believe that experienced parish pastors will find this book confirming, as it will communicate to them that what they are doing regarding sexual issues is pretty much what they ought to be doing (responding pastorally as issues arise, being mindful of their own limits, and putting people in touch with other professionals when this seems indicated). Seminarians will also find it a

solid resource, as it gives them a sense of the kinds of issues they will be presented with in parish ministry, and the level of expertise they will be expected realistically to exhibit when these issues arise. The book also provides some good bibliographic resources with explanations for why they are included. I am guessing that some readers will take issue with Arnold, not so much for what he says as for what he leaves unsaid. But this is the inevitable hazard of writing a book that takes up several sexual issues at once. In any case, the real message of the book is that pastors *can* respond to sexual issues helpfully if they know themselves well enough. This, of course, is a big "if," but if Arnold thought it were an impossible dream, he wouldn't have written this book, nor would I be recommending it.

Donald Capps
Princeton Theological Seminary

Anderson, Herbert, and Kenneth R. Mitchell. *Leaving Home*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp. 160. \$9.99.

This well-written and informative book is the first in a five-book series on important life cycle transitions for individuals and families. Each book in the series will be authored by Anderson and at least one other person. The second text, entitled *Becoming Married*, has also been recently released. The other three titles in the series will be *Raising Children*, *Promising Again*, and *Living Alone*.

In this book on the life-long process of leaving home, the authors use their considerable academic and clinical knowledge in concert with their own life experience in ways that make this a very rich text for all engaged in helping ministries *and* for all of us who experience the life task of leaving home. Herbert Anderson, a professor of pastoral theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and Kenneth Mitchell, who served as both a seminary professor and a pastoral counselor before his death in 1991, previously teamed up in 1983 to produce *All Our Losses: All Our Grievs*. In this new text, Anderson and Mitchell have again created a book that brings together human experience, cutting-edge theory from the social sciences, and profound theological insight. It is perhaps the deep integration in this text that makes it so valuable.

This book is grounded in the premise that leaving home and allowing our children to leave home are among the most important life tasks that individuals and families need to accomplish. They suggest that leaving home is an emotional, intellectual, relational, systemic, and physical experience that may be defined as happening in a particular moment but is also a process that extends over much of the life cycle.

One of the most important constructs in the book is that of paradox. The authors frequently say, for example, that one must leave home well in order

to be able to return, and that one must have a home and claim a home before one can leave it—two challenging and paradoxical tasks. Anderson and Mitchell are clear that families need to be able to balance both sides of life's many paradoxes in order to move well through the various life cycle changes that are part of human life. The paradoxes that are seen to be central in family life include: the need for community matched by the need for autonomy; the drive toward change and growth in the context of the drive for stability; the ability to be close requiring the ability to be separate; and the need to love others as they are in order for them to be able to change. Mitchell and Anderson write, "The family's task is not always to overcome paradox but to learn how to live with it and in it. Maintaining equilibrium in the family is not just preserving a negative status quo but a matter of keeping the paradox as well-balanced as possible" (p. 95). The book is about this process of living with paradox—about nurturing and about letting go.

Anderson and Mitchell focus on the adolescent and young-adult developmental stages as a starting place for the discussion of letting go, but they touch on this task as it occurs throughout the life span. They discuss some of the particularities of individual and family development as when they talk about experiences of abuse, about the way the two genders experience developmental tasks differently, and about the influence of ethnicity on family rules and rituals for leaving home. Mostly, though, the authors speak about the commonalities of family development. With this emphasis they may err occasionally in overgeneralizing family experience, but they try to identify their perspectives and assumptions throughout.

This book models the attempt to live within paradox—it is theoretically systematic, at the same time it is rich in story and experience; it is psychologically informed, and it is theologically grounded; it is tender and compassionate, and it is rigorous and scholarly; and it addresses the challenges and problems of leaving home while focusing on health and normalcy. This is a book that speaks to the reader experientially as it competently informs the practice of ministry. I highly recommend *Leaving Home* to all who are interested in ministry and family life, and I eagerly look forward to the rest of this series.

Christie Cozad Neuger
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

DeMarinis, Valerie M. *Critical Caring: A Feminist Model for Pastoral Psychology*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. Pp xii + 159. \$22.00.

With the publication of this book the field of pastoral theology has been given its first single-authored text on pastoral psychology and pastoral theological method from a feminist perspective. Valerie DeMarinis, a scholar, professor, and pastoral counselor, has put together a complex work that

begins in theory and method and then moves to extended casework to illustrate the theory. The book is clearly a text for specialists in pastoral counseling and psychotherapy, but it has a great deal of wisdom for all who are interested in spiritual and psychological health.

At the core of this text are two powerful and paradoxical metaphors. These two metaphors convey DeMarinis' intention for the text. The first metaphor is that of responsible scavenging. She suggests that scavengers have been thought of negatively—as those who take indiscriminately and uncaringly from others. However, she feels that this metaphor can helpfully identify the work of pastoral psychology, especially from a critical feminist hermeneutic. "Scavengers have the ability to investigate below the surface in order to make important decisions. . . . The responsible scavenger is one who is skilled at survival, one who knows how to search, salvage, purify, and transform the elements of the world into that which nurtures and sustains life" (p. 13). DeMarinis contends that responsible scavenging is not just a key metaphor for her feminist method in pastoral psychology, but is something in which each of us needs to engage for our own health.

The second paradoxical metaphor at the core of this text's method comes from the title—critical caring. DeMarinis says that "caring" too often has been defined in opposition to "critical" and that the two must function together for optimal health. Critical, she says, should be understood in both of its meanings as "careful judgment" and "crucial intervention." Caring implies appropriate concern and support. Each enhances and informs the other, not only in good pastoral counseling, but in the general activity of human life.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part is a careful, in-depth explanation of DeMarinis' method and theory. She says that we must be deeply aware of all three crucial elements of pastoral psychology—(1) the theological and philosophical worldview that undergirds the development of (2) our theory and of (3) our technique. These three elements constitute what she calls a triangle of responsibility. The base of this triangle, theology/philosophy, requires both an understanding of our primary hermeneutic for interpreting worldviews and a clear understanding of human nature. Only out of that foundation can theory and technique be responsibly developed.

DeMarinis then describes her model of human nature, which is that human beings have two fundamental instincts that will operate unless they are blocked by powerful, negative forces. These two basic human instincts are the religious instinct and the relational instinct—the essential and the existential.

Using these elements of critical caring, responsible scavenging, the triangle of responsibility, and the foundational instincts of human personality, DeMarinis constructs a theory and technique of pastoral psychotherapy (which

she distinguishes from pastoral care and pastoral counseling). She uses the four historical functions of pastoral care—healing, guiding, reconciling, and sustaining—to develop a method for pastoral psychotherapy that puts theology at its heart and empowerment for critical caring as its goal.

The second part of this book focuses on four extended case studies that illustrate the theory and method described in part one. Each case contains a description of the counseling situation and then moves systematically through the therapeutic process. At the heart of her psychotherapeutic method is the use of symbol and ritual. Ritual is key to the pastoral psychotherapeutic process as it takes the symbolic world of the counselee's past and present, where meaning is housed, and anchors it in ways that help the counselee have ongoing access to it. This access allows the counselee to contain the negative rituals of her past and to construct healthy critical caring for her present and future.

The case studies are of women's lives representing different parts of the life cycle. DeMarinis uses women's lives because their life experiences have consistently been left out of theory building in the past. However, her feminist hermeneutical method of pastoral psychology is not limited to work with women. It is relevant and helpful for all people.

I would only name three limitations in this work. First, DeMarinis' writing style in part one is dry and somewhat tedious. She uses almost an outline style with many lists, which makes the complexity of the method hard to follow and to integrate. Fortunately, the case studies do that integrative work. Second, many of the case-study subjects imply a level of insight and sophistication that is hard to generalize to all counselees. This sense of idealized awareness in the counselees may be a function of the case-study approach itself—having to convey a longer process in a limited space—but it appears that these particular counseling clients may have been somewhat unique, especially the younger ones. And, third, there is an assumption of fairly long-term therapy suggested in this method and confirmed by the cases that may no longer be practical in a world of managed care and insurance limits. The need for brief and effective pastoral counseling methods is before us.

On the whole, though, this book is very inviting and intriguing. The weaving together of historic pastoral care functions with the effective use of symbol and ritual makes it a deeply integrated pastoral approach to emotional and spiritual health. Specialists will find the book valuable for what it says about method in pastoral care, counseling, and psychotherapy, and all readers will find it a helpful book for regaining access to their own process of critical caring for self, others, and God.

Christie Cozad Neuger
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Glaz, Maxine, and Jeanne Stevenson Moessner, eds. *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. Pp. xii + 225. \$11.95.

This is a solid resource of conceptual depth and practical accessibility for seminarians and clergy alike, as they seek to understand and embody care in response to the unique needs of women in the church today.

The nine authors represent a good diversity of clinical and academic vocational settings as well as eight different denominations. They admit there is no diversity of race or class among them, only the perspective of white, middle-class women. They nonetheless seek to break the silence about who women are, the travails they experience under patriarchy, the developing sense of self they seek, the care they need in the church, and legitimate understandings of God as compassionate and empowering presence.

Part one of the book sets a helpful theoretical framework for understanding women psychologically as gendered selves shaped by Western culture. Four themes in women's experience are set forth from an object relations developmental perspective. Theological reflection on these psychological themes is brief and selective. In proposing a post-Freudian psychology of women, there follows a discussion of selected psychologies of/by women from feminism's first wave (Wickes, Horney, and Dunbar) and second wave (Mahler, Miller, Chodorow, and Gilligan), resulting in two alternative theories about the development of feminine character: (1) that it is a byproduct of history and culture, and (2) that it is a byproduct of a particular developmental experience within the Western, postindustrial family. The editors favor the latter view as evidenced in the four themes, although not all of the authors are so clearly theoretically aligned and committed.

Part two of the book offers selected topics addressing women's experience of travail and appropriate pastoral care response. These topics include the search for self amid work and love (by Bonnie Miller-McLemore), women's body as source of identity and betrayal (by Mary James Dean and Mary Louis Cullen), the shame of sexual abuse (by Nancy Ramsay), the battered woman (by JoAnn Garma), depression (by Christie Neuger), and five increasingly common lifestyles of women in the absence of men (by Priscilla Denham). While each appeals to women's experience in some way, the pastoral methodology is unique in each of these chapters.

The third and concluding part of the book summarizes findings and offers a new pastoral paradigm, the paradigm of "neighbor" who gives care from the side of the road, as an alternative to the more authoritarian "shepherd" paradigm that has prevailed for decades in pastoral theology. This is an engaging chapter, rich with exegetical precision and creative in its use of the parable of the Good Samaritan to construct the image of interconnection in pastoral care in which the care giver is empowered to love neighbor through

her love of God and partnership with others in the community (e.g., the innkeeper), never giving up love of self in the process.

In my view the limits of the book are primarily the result of limits in perspective. The post-Freudian object relations perspective is the only one offered in depth. The possibilities and limits (from a feminist perspective) of various other theoretical perspectives—e.g., Jungian, Adlerian, cognitive-behavioral, family systems—might have proven helpful, since several authors relied on these. Because there is no critical comparison of current theories, the limits of object relations theory are underplayed (when relationality becomes enmeshment, when mothering is a model of care that nonmothers cannot experience), the perspective of women is sometimes idealized (as it is in the work of Schaef and Gilligan), and the rightful authority of ministry is left unarticulated.

Second, the white, middle-class perspective of the book occasionally blinds the authors to the diversity of women's experience. For example, the compliance and conformity that are resisted by middle-class women are a survival skill of the working class, which is considered here a less mature stage of development (p. 198). The stated goal of a gender-free perspective and a universal theology also obscures the recognition of significant disparities in social-economic-political life.

Women in Travail and Transition is an important book in pastoral care and theology. I will use it as a text for a class that previously used secular texts and collected articles from journals. It provides a significant state-of-the-art view of pastoral care with women today. Each chapter has a helpful bibliography, directing the reader to further resources.

Judith L. Orr

Saint Paul School of Theology

VanderZee, John T. *Ministry to Persons with Chronic Illnesses: A Guide to Empowerment through Negotiation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1993. Pp. 128. \$9.95.

Once in a while a book comes along that fills a gap in the pastoral care literature. This small book proposes significant changes in the ways that pastors and congregations define illness and perform their ministry with people who are chronically ill.

Because pastors place a high priority on visiting the sick in hospitals, most are aware of the changes in our health-care system. We know that our congregants are in and out of the hospital in a very short period of time. We see that the focus on care in the hospital is giving way to increasing attention to medical care before and after hospitalization. What pastors might overlook is that there has been almost no change in the whole system's focus on acute illness, whether in or out of the hospital. In the hospital, physicians are

still making heroic attempts to cure hopelessly ill patients in the final stages of their lives. Outside the hospital, home-care nurses report that even among their chronically ill patients they still have to focus on caring for acute episodes and not take a holistic approach to the person coping with perhaps multiple chronic illnesses.

According to VanderZee, the church does no better than our health-care institutions in recognizing and caring for people with chronic illness. Pastors have bought into the current medical model, which defines illness as a temporary phenomenon that is cured when symptoms are relieved and the person returns to a "normal" state of health. VanderZee challenges pastors and churches to take another look at illness; to redefine illness to include the more than thirty million Americans who are coping with chronic illness. Moreover, he urges us to take a good look at the people in our congregations who may be suffering as much physically, emotionally, and spiritually as those in the hospital. The suffering of the chronically ill is usually invisible to others in the congregation and, unlike many patients in the hospital, their suffering is unending. The most common chronic illnesses are called the "dirty dozen" since they are the most crippling, physically and emotionally. These include most arthritic and degenerative spinal diseases, lupus, Parkinson's disease, lung diseases, multiple sclerosis, heart disease, stroke, and dystrophies. Other diseases that the author adds to the list include diabetes, ulcerative colitis, Alzheimer's, and chronic mental illness such as depression, schizophrenia, and personality disorders. Absent from the author's list are diseases of alcoholism and drug addiction.

Once pastors and congregants recognize the growing number of people with chronic illnesses in the pews and home-bound in the community, then they are ready to make use of VanderZee's model for ministry. The model expands on Laurel Burton's pastoral paradigms (adapted from family systems theory), which compare and contrast three methods. On the one end is the "traditional" paradigm where authority is in the care giver. On the other end is the "individualist" paradigm where authority is resisted by both the care giver and receiver. The "negotiation" paradigm is a synthesis of the two extremes whereby both care giver and receiver are in a reciprocal relationship of shared power and authority. The negotiation paradigm is derived from the work of ethicist Daniel Callahan of the Hastings Center and psychiatrist Arthur Kleinman of Harvard Medical School, who propose that the health-care system shift its focus from acute care to continuity of care. Kleinman's work on physician-patient communication stresses the importance of negotiating the patient's perspective on illness with the expert advice of the physician.

Pastoral negotiation needs to be a comprehensive part of the ministry of the church. Visiting in the hospital is not enough. VanderZee proposes a method of holistic care that includes interpersonal, environmental, and theo-

logical negotiation. Although the author develops the negotiation paradigm in a comprehensive way, he does not discuss its limitations. With some children, and mentally ill, incapacitated, or demented persons, negotiation may be limited.

This book is must reading for all pastors. I hope that many congregations will study, digest, and apply VanderZee's fresh insights, and bring deep spiritual life not only to the chronically ill but to all members of the body.

John R. deVelder

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital

Moore, R. Laurence. *Selling God: American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Pp. 317. \$25.00.

R. Laurence Moore, professor of history at Cornell University, addresses an important question in this lively book. How is it that American religions have flourished despite the separation of church and state, and why does their success often prompt charges that faith has been secularized? The query is old, but Moore's answer is novel. Americans have been adept, he explains, at adjusting their piety to popular sentiment and at borrowing or inventing commercial strategies to hawk their spiritual wares in the marketplace of culture. Thus, at least in the American context, "secularization has to do not with the disappearance of religion but its commodification." According to Moore, this tendency did not begin with Jim Bakker's Heritage Park or Cecil B. DeMille's cinematic combinations of sex and the Bible. "Selling God" has characterized American religion at least since the deliberately contrived publicity tactics of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening of the mid-1700s.

The selling of religion began in a big way in the nineteenth century. With the drying up of state support for churches and with the advent of a more democratized culture, religious leaders realized that they had to proceed in a deliberately promotional fashion to shape popular taste and win adherents. Protestant leaders innovated in the field of publishing by creating religious newspapers by the score and by inundating the land with entertaining and edifying religious tracts. The key word was "entertaining." Although Protestants initially distrusted popular amusements, they began to recognize that they had to make religion interesting if they wished to move the masses. Thus revivalism at the famous campmeeting at Cane Ridge in 1801 assumed the air of a carnival; and subsequent evangelists conducted their campaigns with a studied theatricality. By the close of the nineteenth century, revivalist Dwight L. Moody was running his evangelistic crusades like an efficient business. In the same years, YMCAs sought to join the appeal of athletics to "muscular Christianity," the Chautauqua movement offered re-creating and moral uplift to vacationers, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union

fought demon rum at meetings in attractive surroundings with choral entertainment. Religion, in short, had become what Moore calls "a species of paid amusement."

By the early-twentieth century, advertising had come into its own as a profession, and Protestant church leaders tried to use it with a vengeance. Social Gospeler Charles Stelzle, for example, deliberately aped the movie houses and vaudeville theatres in order to drum up attendance at his New York City Labor Temple, identified to passers-by with an electric marquee. In company with progressive business families such as the Rockefellers and the Dodges, the leaders of mainline Protestant churches sought to subject their organizations to businesslike efficiency and to employ effective church publicity—all in the name of promoting the Christianization of America. By midcentury, mainline Protestants had lost their innovativeness and ambition in the cultural marketplace, but not before, says Moore, "they had prepared the way for the world of televangelism in which everything is for sale, including an assortment of Armageddons seeming to exceed in number all the varieties of dog foods, canned soups, and ribbed condoms in an upstate New York grocery store."

Although one might take issue with the author over specific points of interpretation or protest that there has been more to religion than market dynamics, it is hard to contest his central argument, namely, that the success of religion in America has been due, at least in significant measure, to efforts to "sell God" in the marketplace of culture. Moore wishes to analyze the phenomenon not lament it, but many of the readers of this journal may be more inclined to mourn the commodification of religion. In any event, everyone engaged in ministry would do well to wrestle with the troublesome issues raised by this provocative book.

James H. Moorhead
Princeton Theological Seminary

Dorsett, Lyle W. *Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991. Pp. 212. \$14.95.

This second book in the Library of Religious Biography series, edited by Mark A. Noll and Nathan O. Hatch, may strike the reader as a problematic selection. The editors have, however, made a discerning choice.

Billy Sunday's (1862–1935) rise from rural Iowa obscurity; his brief but successful career in professional baseball; his conversion and his sudden abandonment of a future in the National League for a calling to vocational ministry, first as a representative of the YMCA and later as an evangelist, are graphically recounted.

In studying the life of this flamboyant and controversial figure, Dorsett,

Professor of History and Director of Urban Studies at Wheaton College, had two distinct advantages over Sunday's earlier biographers. First, the family's extensive papers were, for the first time, available. Also, not having known either Sunday or his resolute wife gave Dorsett an objectivity lacking in the earlier works.

Sunday's dearth of theological training and his continual exposure to conservative evangelical Protestants led him to become, as one might expect, a fervent proponent of classical American fundamentalism. Yet, whatever one may say negatively about him, Billy Sunday manifested an incredible ability to learn from those who were competent and effective.

Beginning in small U.S. towns and working his way up through medium-size cities to the largest metropolitan centers—including New York City—Sunday became the most acclaimed (as well as ridiculed) evangelist in the country. His preaching was certainly energetic and entertaining, and some said it was biblically based. For the most part, however, his sermons—two examples of which are included in the book—were little more than cleverly developed morality pieces and well-honed promises of prosperity and bliss either now or in the hereafter for the believer, along with dire threats and vivid descriptions of calamity, anguish, and torment for the unrepentant sinner. Sunday's denigration of church membership and attendance is one example of the kind of thing that appealed to individualistic North Americans. "Going to church don't make anybody a Christian," he would bellow, "anymore than taking a wheelbarrow into a garage makes it an automobile." The question is, was Sunday's portrayal of the Christian life adequate to the message of Jesus? The Sunday prescription for "getting right with God" included abstaining from strong drink, card playing, and dancing; doing an honest day's work; and spending more time with one's spouse and children.

Though Dorsett says little about Billy Graham, the parallels between him and Billy Sunday are eerie, and the dissimilarities are striking. Both can be regarded as gifted persons who have achieved fame and a measure of prosperity. Disturbing, however, has been their willingness to trade on their celebrity status in order to consort with the rich and the powerful. Likewise, the approach of both Sunday and Graham reveals the widespread hankering to understand the gospel in the simplest and least demanding terms of personal belief and morality.

Dorsett clearly admires his subject, but he does not attempt to conceal Billy Sunday's lapses in judgment, his life-long struggle with feelings of low self-esteem, his growing obsession with money, or the pathetic end of three of his four children. The book is well written and worth reading, and in view of the unending stream of evangelists that bless or afflict American Protestantism—depending on one's point of view—anyone interested in the religious scene in this country should be familiar with the life of Billy Sunday

who, except for his successor Billy Graham, has been the most renowned evangelist in U.S. history.

Alan Neely

Princeton Theological Seminary

Woodward, Ruth L., and Wesley Frank Craven. *Princetonians, 1784-1790: A Biographical Dictionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. Pp. lxiii + 618. \$59.50.

Looney, J. Jefferson, and Ruth L. Woodward. *Princetonians, 1791-1794: A Biographical Dictionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. Pp. lxiii + 577. \$59.50.

The first volumes of this set began to appear in 1976, providing alumni biographies of the College of New Jersey (later known as Princeton University) from the school's beginnings during the waning heat of the First Great Awakening in 1746. These final two volumes close the series with the class of 1794, marking the end of John Witherspoon's tenure as college President, just short of the school's fiftieth anniversary. Meticulously researched, artfully written, and handsomely packaged, these volumes are an outstanding resource for anyone interested in the history of Princeton, college or town, New Jersey genealogy, the Presbyterian Church, or American history in general. Packed with information, yet crafted in a lively and often humorous manner, these essays will provide both the professional and nonspecialist alike with fascinating and engrossing reading material.

The biographical essays vary in length and scope, some consisting of only a few paragraphs, while others extend to nearly twenty pages. Each of these essays, however, bears evidence of the considerable creativity and sleuthing abilities of the authors. Though the necessary records from this period are often incomplete or lacking, the authors have gone to extraordinary lengths to track down obscure sources. In the case of one graduate whose name has not been determined beyond "_____ St. C. _____," the authors have been able to compile five pages of material! Many of the graduates went on to careers of great significance in American life, and these receive particularly thorough treatment. Among the Princeton alumni of this period there were two U.S. Supreme Court Justices, nine U.S. Senators, four state governors, and twenty-five members of the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as numerous military officers, clergymen, physicians, educators, and businessmen. At least five of these served on Princeton Seminary's early Board of Trustees and/or Directors.

Those interested in the early development of the College will, no doubt, be struck by the impact that Witherspoon had on its graduates. Presbyterian

minister, champion of the so-called common sense philosophy, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and one of the towering figures in American intellectual and social history, Witherspoon, we are told, "labored to integrate what he undoubtedly considered the most exciting trends of his time—the outpouring of vital piety and the growth of scientific enlightenment." He insisted that Princeton men be both pious and learned. He "urged balance and moderation upon his students—humility before God, a critical but respectful approach to learning, and a temperate indulgence of the appetites." As these biographies make clear, this worthy project was not always successful, but Witherspoon's imprint was unmistakable in his students' lives.

As the introduction, biographical essays, and appended lists indicate, this tempestuous time in the new nation's history was particularly difficult for the life of Princeton. The Mid-Atlantic region was hit far harder by the War of Independence than was New England. Princeton itself was the site of a major battle. Despite its difficulties, Princeton was able slowly to recover and was the fourth largest college in the United States during this time (after New England's Harvard, Yale, and Dartmouth). The 246 graduates of Princeton between 1784 and 1794 constituted twelve percent of all the A.B. degrees granted in the United States during the period.

The fascinating tables in the introduction and lists in the appendixes trace the places of origin of the students, locations where they settled after graduation, and the career paths they took. A number of interesting trends are discernible. For example, one learns that Princeton increasingly turned to the South, at the expense of New England, for many of its students. The result was a student body more geographically diverse than that of any other college in America. And while its administration was almost exclusively Presbyterian, it educated many who were not. Of the ten percent of the student body studying for ministry, for example, the majority were Presbyterian, but there were also substantial contingents of Congregationalists, Dutch Reformed, Baptists, and Episcopalians.

These volumes are a splendid addition to our understanding of the early Princetonians. They will prove highly useful (and just plain fun) to a wide range of readers.

William O. Harris
Princeton Theological Seminary

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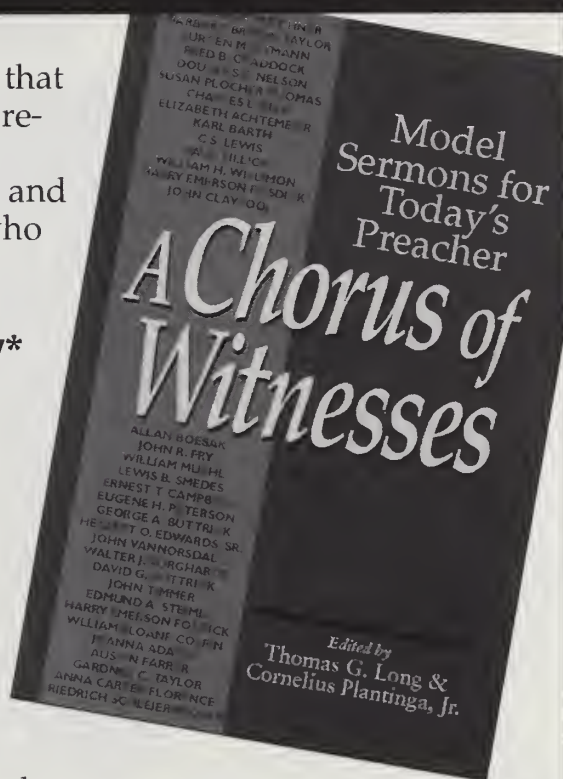
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